THE CROSS IN SYMBOL, SPIRIT AND WORSHIP

WILLIAM F. ROTHENBURGER

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
DEC 2 1930
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BT 751 .R673 1930
Rothenburger, William
Frederic, 1874-
The cross in symbol, spirit
and worship

DEC 2 1930
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE
CROSS IN SYMBOL
SPIRIT AND WORSHIP

By

WILLIAM FREDRIC ROTHENBURGER

MINISTER THIRD CHRISTIAN CHURCH
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

THE STRATFORD COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

COPYRIGHT — 1930 — BY
THE STRATFORD COMPANY
Publishers
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PRINTED BY
THE ALPINE PRESS, INC., BOSTON, MASS.

To

MY WIFE

COMPANION IN TRAVEL

AND

CO-PARTNER IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Foreword

THE Easter season finds increasing numbers of people engaged in serious thought. Added emphasis on the spiritual life during the whole Lenten period is no longer confined to any one denomination. All major bodies in Christendom and many minor ones are reaping an annual harvest both in an enlarged membership and in the quickening of the spiritual life of the local church. Besides this, union meetings of far reach in the down-town and residence districts in scores of cities great and small have commanded thousands of busy men and women and have become the most popular effort of the year. For the present at least, to ignore this seasonal period of inspiration is to rob one's church of one of the most fruitful types of work in modern religious life.

Naturally, therefore, the anthology of the Cross has greatly increased in recent years. Many splendid volumes have appeared dealing not only with the atonement but with related texts from the epistles and prophecies. Not a few of these have emphasized the theology of the Cross and have, therefore, properly been clothed in the language of the seminary. But for the man in the pew all too little has been written. No one, of course, who chooses to add another volume to the literature of this field can do so without acknowledging his great indebtedness to the many excellent works from which inevitably he both consciously and unconsciously draws.

Like most volumes this one is the result of the author's growing interest in the story of the Cross and its bearing on life in our work-a-day world. Much of the material has been used in the pulpit and on the public platform. The chapters in Part One have been presented from the pulpit of "Third Church" in conjunction with a musical interpretation as conceived by Theodore Du Bois in that majestic composition *The Seven Last Words*. Part Two is the result of an historical research prompted by the author's early prejudice against the symbolic use of the Cross as an aid to worship. These chapters, therefore, seek to trace its origin, its uses and abuses through the centuries with a sufficient historical background to dispel the vast amount of ignorance with which the average Christian is possessed regarding it. They seek to remove blind prejudice and to justify its legitimate use in art, in architecture and in worship. With a deep conviction that the current philosophy of naturalism leaves little on which to base religious faith, and with an equal conviction that the opposite extreme has done much mischief, the chapters seek to divest the historical facts of that débris of dogmas which have too frequently obscured their spiritual value to the man in the pew. Such dogmas have left him bound to a confusing theory in which he has little interest rather than having drawn him to a rich program of worship and service by a compelling experience with the spirit of the Cross in his own soul. Part Three expresses the writer's observation that the Lord's Supper is too frequently robbed of its exalted Apostolic place in the scheme of worship and is invested with an over supply of dogmatic emphasis.

The whole project of the volume is, therefore, worked out along practical and spiritual lines and, for the most part, in simple language easily comprehended by the man in the pew. The chapters are the production of a busy pastor whose responsibilities in a large city church, besides official tasks in the greater field of the kingdom, have left few consecutive days outside the vacation period for shaping the material. The treatment of the exalted themes has been all too inadequately done. It does not assume to be exhaustive but it does aspire to be suggestive and to furnish such a sequence of historical facts as to stimulate interest in a further study of the entrancing theme which perennially grips the minds of millions.

W. F. R.

Indianapolis, Indiana.

Contents

Prologue

A PALM SUNDAY MEDITATION

I. Through the Golden Gate to Golgotha 3

Part One

THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS

II. First Word—A Test of Christian Character 19
III. Second Word—A Trialogue on Repentance 31
IV. Third Word—The Rising Star of Womankind 43
V. Fourth Word—The Loneliness of Leadership 57
VI. Fifth Word—The Cup of Water and the Springing Well 69
VII. Sixth Word—The Completed Life and the Incomplete Task 83
VIII. Seventh Word—The Faith of the Ages Sealed 99

Part Two

THE CROSS — SYMBOL AND A SPIRIT

IX. Evolution and Abuse of the Symbol . 115

X. A Panorama of the Cross in Art and Architecture 127

XI. The Pre-Christian Cross in Symbolism 137

XII. Theological Aspects of the Cross . . 147

XIII. The Message of the Cross to the Individual 159

XIV. The Message of the Cross to the Individual *(Continued)* 167

Part Three

THE LORD'S SUPPER — IN MEMORY OF HIM

XV. The Lord's Supper—A Pilgrim's Experience 181

XVI. The Rise of Theology in the Lord's Supper 191

XVII. The Lord's Supper—A Spiritual Experience 201

XVIII. The Lord's Supper—A Spiritual Experience *(Continued)* 211

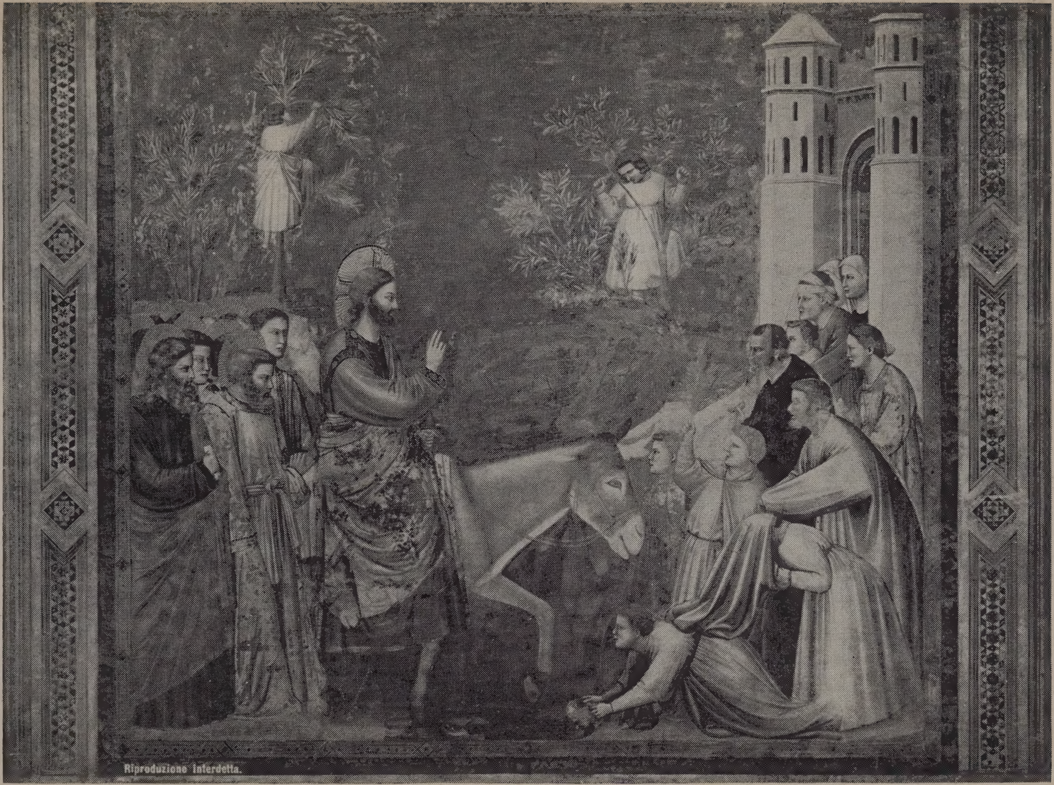
List of Illustrations

OPPOSITE
PAGE
The Triumphal Entry—*(Giotto)* 2
Christ Between Two Thieves—*(Rubens)* . . 16
The Last Supper—*(Da Vinci)* 180

PAGE
Crosses and Symbols 114

Prologue

A PALM SUNDAY MEDITATION


Riproduzione interdetta.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY — GIOTTO

CHAPTER I

Through the Golden Gate to Golgotha

ON the sixth day before the Passover the streets of Jerusalem were beginning to fill with pilgrims from many parts of Palestine. According to John's report, the people were rushing to the city to get a close-up view of the carpenter's son from Nazareth, whose reputation had now swept over the entire country. They had come also to see Lazarus of Bethany, whose raising from the dead in the little village two miles away was the talk of the countryside.

Scattered among curious groups were the Roman soldiers, whose business it was to protect the interests of the state; the disciples who had gathered to do Jesus honor; and the chief priests bent on the disposing of Lazarus because his testimony concerning the miracle had caused many to follow the wonder-worker. Besides all these there were probably representatives of every stratum of life from the humble shepherd and the house-wife to the highest officers of church and state.

One notices at the very beginning of the drama a radical change in Jesus' attitude toward publicity regarding His messiahship. He passes readily and abruptly from extreme reticence to stout approval. Heretofore, He had protested against any public mention of His messianic function; indeed He had suppressed every suggestion of publicity and seems even to have pledged His disciples to secrecy. But now, after three years of preaching, teaching and healing, followed by a growing popularity with the populace and the confession of His Apostles that He is the Christ, He makes no further protest.

More than this, He seems to have set out deliberately to create the opportunity for public recognition, for He, Himself, arranged the plan of the processional. For the first time the Pharisees had acknowledged His popularity in no less a confession than that "the whole world is gone after Him" and with a parallel acknowledgment of their impotency to stem the tide in His favor. When they appeal to Jesus to restrain this burst of enthusiasm in His behalf, His characteristic silence is displaced by the firm rejoinder, "I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."

With all restraint removed from the mind of the principal actor in the drama, His disciples and admirers are at liberty for the first time to give Him public recognition through the prevailing custom of doing honor to a king. The way is strewn with branches of palms plucked from the fields and highways and to these are added clothes from many common backs. As if to remove all doubt from the minds of those who were weighing Him in the scale of the prophets from whom they had gained the expectancy of their Messiah's coming, Jesus employs a common beast, the foal of an ass, and passes over the carpeted highway. "Our Lord," says MacLaren, "deliberately dresses Himself by the mirror of prophecy." The people lift their voices with sustained crescendo, filling the air with the confessional chorus of faith, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." With this loyal acclaim, the Son of David, humbly yet triumphantly, rides through the Golden Gate into the Holy City.

One historical contrast will suffice to accentuate the unusual simplicity of this processional. Less than four decades from this event, Titus Cæsar with an army of eighty thousand men laid siege to the city of Jerusalem. This same Golden Gate which had lifted up its head to Jesus closed it to Titus with prolonged and stubborn resistance. According to Josephus, an eye witness, the Romans in turn let loose their fury, crucifying as many as five hundred Jews a day, until "room was wanting for crosses and crosses wanting for bodies." After a siege which exacted more than a million lives through disease and famine as well as fighting, Titus returned to Rome with his spoils and captives by way of Syria and Egypt, impressing every spectator along the way with the power of his armies and the supremacy of his government. The joint triumph of three Romans was staged with great splendor. Spoils consisting of ivory, gold, silver, tapestries and temple furniture, together with many captives played no little part in this proud return. To this was added a more elaborate pageantry which reproduced the manner of conquest and included the commanders of captive cities. Josephus describes it as follows:

> "Moreover, there followed these pageants a great number of ships; and for the other spoils they were carried in great plenty. But for those that were taken in the temple of Jerusalem, they made the greatest figure of all; that is, the golden table of the weight of many talents; the candle stick also that was made of gold . . . and the last of all the spoils was carried the law of the Jews . . . after which Vespasian marched in the first place and Titus followed him; Domician also rode along with them and made a glorious appearance and rode on a horse that was worthy of admiration."[1]

Let it be remembered that this event transpired in the seventieth year of the Christian era while John, who had been part of the processional march of the lowly Nazarene, was still alive.

---

[1] Josephus, Book VII, 5: 5.

Two historic arches remain to bear testimony to these similar yet radically different events—the Arch of Titus in Rome and the Golden Gate in Jerusalem. The interior of the Arch of Titus portrays the scene with horses, chariots, soldiers, captives and many spoils carved in stone in memory of that proud event in Roman history. The Golden Gate has been closed with masonry for centuries and above it Mohammedans have long held prayer. But far more significant are the millions of human hearts into which the spirit of the Christ has gone, bearing a more eloquent testimony than arches of stone built by the hand of man.

Papini calls attention to the fact that originally, the wild ass was rebellious and unruly and that Jesus deliberately chose the untrained colt not as a symbol of meekness, but rather as a symbol of the rebellious spirit of His nation "which no prophet and no monarch had mastered . . . and which was tied to a political post with a Roman rope." Just as Jesus unloosed and rode the beast into Jerusalem, so would He some day separate the nation from Rome and conquer it for Himself.

This modest processional on the part of Jesus as a king, armed not with weapons of warfare but with the sword of the spirit, was not only in great contrast to the behavior of political kings but also in keeping with His whole ministry. MacLaren speaks of His "one moment of royal pomp as eloquent of His humiliation as the long stretch of His lovely life is." Without doubt many of His followers did not yet clearly comprehend His method of conquest. Some still thought of Him as a political king after the fashion of Solomon or that long line of conquerors who fell within the range of their historical knowledge—Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Nebuchadrezzar, the Pharoahs and the Cæsars.

Clearly Jesus meant to demonstrate the fact that He was a new kind of conquering king. Others were followed by retinues of soldiers bearing with them the spoils of war; but Jesus is followed by disorganized groups waving palm branches as symbols of good will. Other kings were accompanied by hosts of the conquered whom they reduced to slavery; those who accompanied Jesus were freemen, liberated by the principles of truth. Others gloried in conquest by brutal force; Jesus' glory lay in conquest by an irresistible love. Time has vindicated His policy and we may exclaim with Schofield Thayer,

> "How odd that this maid Mary's son
> Who was a simple boy,
> That he should teach great kings to run
> This earth's unsimple toy!"

This kind of king implies a corresponding type of kingdom. It is spiritual and, therefore, invisible. It is situated in the human heart and therefore, cannot be limited by the boundary lines of nations or of races. The King Himself likens the kingdom to "leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened." With a mystic tie it binds earth to heaven and is destined to weld the nations and the races together into a universal brotherhood.

But this kingdom is likewise visible and, like a grain of mustard seed, is destined to become as mighty as a tree in whose shadow a weary world may seek relief from its sweltering toil. Now it is seen in the form of the sacred ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; then in organization, in art, in symbol and in the beautiful lines of architecture. That which is hidden from the eye is the soul of the kingdom, while that which can be seen is the body. With the fabulous wealth now in the hands of the church, with millions invested in huge piles of stone and marble, and with an increase of ecclesiastical machinery, it must beware lest it become a giant in body but a dwarf in soul.

With this kind of a king and kingdom it inevitably follows that its subjects must comply with the ideals of their king. How searching are the words of Jesus regarding His subjects! They are asked to receive His kingdom as little children; indeed, says He, "except ye turn and become as little children, ye cannot enter." Again, His subjects are wholly unlike the

Gentiles over whom their rulers lord it and are called benefactors. In His sight, those who become greatest are the ones who serve most. Here are the embryonic principles of democracy which have shaken the foundations of empires. Many of them have fallen and on their ruins new governments have risen. Among these are Germany, Russia, Austria and China, besides lesser ones, all within the memory of this generation. This is the principal reason why the common people in such large numbers flocked to see Jesus. For the first time in the experience of the race, here is a commonwealth placing the high and the low on the same basis of citizenship. It is little wonder that the outcasts of India see in the kingdom of Christ their only hope and have also flocked to it in such large numbers. It was a great day when, to borrow Edwin Markham's phrase, "the man with the hoe" and the king on the throne were measured by the same standards of worth.

In these recent years men have taken with increasing seriousness Jesus' requirements of citizenship in His kingdom. They have thrown the searchlight of the social gospel on the old order of things and have forced upon themselves the question whether a citizen of the spiritual commonwealth dare longer be at ease in a pagan-minded political state. Millions of loyal citizens all over the world have come to feel that their greatest patriotism lies in saving their governments from the folly of their paganism. What a benediction will fall upon the human family when the half billion subjects of Jesus square themselves with their King and project fully His spirit into the affairs of the state.

The testimony of history has many times vindicated the policy adopted by Jesus for His kingdom and pictured the defeat of its enemies. The Nietzschean philosophy that "might makes right" received a terrific blow during the World War. Neither Nietzsche nor his country were guilty beyond many other individuals and countries. His nation only threw the bomb which turned the world into a battlefield because the world mood was a war mood. This is a severe indictment on our Christian civilization, but there is every evidence that the spirit of Christ is gradually driving out the spirit of Titus and that new triumphal entries are in process. One of the most significant of these took place in August, 1928, when in Paris, the temporary capital of fifteen nations, the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact was signed—the most suggestive and important treaty in the history of international relations. That more than half a hundred nations have now committed themselves to the task of outlawing war is almost incredible. Some day it will be accomplished.

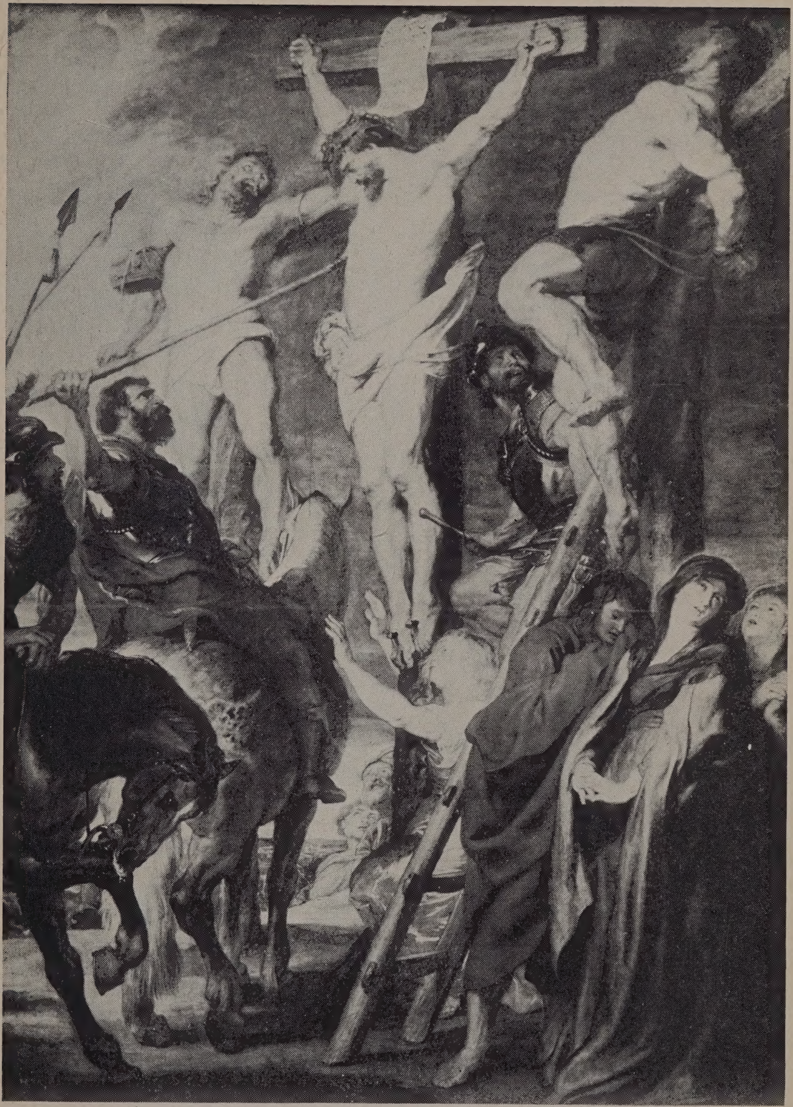
Parallel with this tremendous change of spirit among the so-called Christian nations has come also a gradual change in their relations with the non-Christian nations. That the West in the beginning gained its economic foothold among these peoples by force and that it has been maintained by the same policy is a matter of common knowledge to the student of history. The Opium War in China; the taking of a great area of Tientsin over night; the more recent dispersing of a street conclave in Delhi, India, by the wholesale shooting of zealous protestors against alien domination; the practice of extra-territoriality; the enforcing of unequal treaties and the maintaining of economic spheres of influence, are increasingly felt to be wholly out of harmony with the spirit of the kingdom. Furthermore, their continuance must inevitably result in other Black Holes of Calcutta. Whether this changed attitude has been forced upon us by the lash of conscience or by the wisdom of expediency, or both, the fact remains that the white man's future among these peoples can only be maintained on the basis of good will and mutual interest. It also follows that unless the missionary enterprise is freed from the policy of "gun boat" protection and projected wholly on its merits, it will fail of its divine mission.

On the way to majestic Jungfrau, one stands long at Trümmelbach bei Lauterbrunnen or Trembling River. Scientists tell us that this roaring stream of melted snow from the upper Alpine altitude has been tumbling over these rocks for at least a hundred thousand years. In spite of its soft texture the water has worn a crevasse into the solid granite a hundred feet in depth. In this same fashion, according to Jesus, the meek are to inherit the earth. "They are like the water," writes Papini, "which is not hard to the touch, which seems to give way to other substances, but slowly rises, silently attacks and calmly consumes with the patience of years the hardest granite." If one should become impatient with the slowness with which the meekness of the kingdom does its work, let him scan the history of the centuries and note how its spirit, like a mighty stream, has worn away prejudice and hate, leaving deep channels in the rocky stratum of human society through which it continues to flow with increasing velocity and power.

But the price of meekness is death. Beyond the Golden Gate is the Cross waiting for the "lamb, slain from before the foundation of the world." Five more days of teaching will force the church and the state either to accept or reject the new type of king. The die is soon cast and Jesus is nailed to the Cross. The words spoken from this paradoxical throne are like seven sparkling jewels, each reflecting the spirit of Him who had worn them on His soul throughout all His life. They reflect His attitude toward His enemies, His unparalleled compassion for those who miss the trail, and His exalted estimate of womankind. They reveal His perfect humanity, the limitations of His body, the completion of His own work and His perfect confidence in the Father's care. They are seven precious links forged out of a divine-human experience, binding earth to heaven with a chain of adamant and "investing our temporal life with eternal" significance.

Part One

THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS



CHRIST BETWEEN TWO THIEVES — RUBENS

The First Word

"Father, forgive them for they know not what
they do." —Luke 23:34.

CHAPTER II

A Test of Christian Character

ALL the accusations hurled against Jesus during His trials were roughly summed up in the single sentence placed in Hebrew, Greek and Latin above His head—"This is the King of the Jews." The seven spoken words which fell from the fevered lips of Jesus were a "seven-toned symphony" whose echoes after nineteen centuries still stir the souls of men. They contain nothing in principle or philosophy which His three years of teaching and conduct did not employ. Rather they epitomize the spirit and behavior of His whole life. They "are to us as the bright lights of Heaven shining at intervals through the darkness, or as the loud thunderous tones from above and within, which interpret the Cross, and in which it receives, so to speak, another collective superscript."[1]

"Father, forgive them," was spoken on Friday morning while the echoes of the hammer still rang in His ears. Did this forgiveness include only those who drove the nails and lifted the Cross that its base might slip with a thud into the socket prepared for it? No, it was meant for all those who contributed to this tragic hour—the Roman soldiers, Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, Annas, the members of the Sanhedrin, the man who spat in His face, the one who pressed the crown of thorns into His brow, as well as those who goaded His sides to urge Him on His way up the Via Dolorosa. Yes, it included even Judas who had sold him for the price of a slave and with a poison kiss had singled Him out that His enemies might place Him under arrest.

---

[1] **Stiers, *Words of the Lord Jesus*, p. 696.**

Some have been primarily concerned with the theology of these words. They ask, Did He mean to forgive those who preceded, those who followed His prayer, and all those who, in the future, might sin against God? Was it an unconditional petition covering not only those who were in covenant relations with Him, but all others besides? Let him who will pause here for speculation. If he is a professed follower of Christ it will throw no great challenge at his manhood; neither will it test his Christian character. The more important task is that of squaring life with the principle of forgiveness as Jesus Himself lived it and taught it and of which this scene is the natural climax.

In the principle of forgiveness lies one of the distinct and original contributions of Jesus to the conduct of men. The ethics of non-Christian religions made no protest against the inflicting of violence upon an offending brother. Rather, violence was considered a mark of manhood and heroism. The Jewish economy which taught "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" would consider a man in orthodox standing if he practiced reciprocity. But the ethics of Jesus demand forgiveness on the part of the offended and impose on Christian character one of its severest tests. The greatest measure of orthodoxy in the church today is not in the field of dogma but in the fields of attitude and conduct. The undesirable trend toward naturalism in the field of philosophy outside the church is scarcely as dangerous as is the pagan ethic within the church which clings to the fabric of our so-called Christian society. One of the greatest questions confronting both men and nations is, Can we forgive others as Christ forgave the motley crowd which both led Him and followed Him to the Cross?

The test is first of all personal. Though the problems which cluster about prayer have been many and vexing, they have not been as serious as our unforgiving moods which unfit us to approach a loving Father. Most of our questionings will disappear with actual experience in talking to God in a forgiving mood. Not long ago the youngest member of the writer's family came to the table with what to her was a warranted grievance against another member. It chanced to be her turn to offer thanks, but she rejoined, "I don't feel like praying." If prayer is a state of mind, then certainly to have insisted that she offer thanks would have been not only an injustice to the child but an affront to God as well. Prayer must be in keeping with the law of the spirit. Is not this what Jesus meant when He said, "Whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against anyone; that your Father also who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses."[2] In the language of the day, every soul has its dial which must tune in to the prescribed number of spiritual kilocycles if it would get a response from God. He who has not met this reciprocal principle is in no mood to pray. His soul is out of tune with God and is, therefore, incapable of receiving what the Father is able to give him. Or, as the Beatitudes imply, it is impossible for the unmerciful to obtain mercy.

This principle of Jesus also tests the efficacy of our worship. For example, here are two professed Christians, both of whom consider themselves orthodox in faith. For many years they blended their voices in repeating the exact words of our Lord, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," while at the same time refusing to exchange words either on the street or in the aisles of the sanctuary. For such a worshipper repeatedly to present himself at the Lord's table, partake of the emblems which represent the very body and blood of a forgiving Christ, is little more than hollow mockery. May not the misguided pagan worshipping at his unkept shrine be nearer the heart of a loving Father than is the unforgiving Christian who in a noble temple prays with hate in his soul?

---

[2] Mark 11: 25.

This principle of forgiveness likewise tests the efficacy of the material gifts we offer. The American church, during a period of unprecedented prosperity, has increased its giving many-fold. This is especially true since a new emphasis was laid on stewardship by the Laymen's Missionary Movement. While these increasing gifts have hardly been commensurate with the growing wealth of the church's constituency, nevertheless they have been prodigious. Simultaneous with our passing from the rank of millionaires to that of billionaires, giving has been raised from what was once considered great to proportions once considered impossible. Churches now have budgets ranging from one hundred thousand to three hundred and fifty thousand dollars per year. Few would deny that these amounts, regardless of the attitude of the givers, will bless mankind in extending the influence of the kingdom. But when narrowed down to God's estimate of the giver, it is dependent again on the attitude of the giver's soul toward others. In the midst of our growing generosity, which God grant may continue, Jesus challenges every disciple with these searching words, "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."[3] These are words which are concerned not with "tainted money" but with tainted hearts.

Even more searching is the fact that God forgives men provided they forgive other men. There are very few sitting in the pews of the churches who at some time during their lives have not been guilty of sin. The consciousness of having a gospel which promises forgiveness through Christ is one of the richest and most satisfying experiences of the Christian ministry. It is, indeed, inspiring to see men and women escape from the nightmare of their evil selves by accepting this good news. Many have grasped at the statement, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."[4] As on the Day of Pentecost, they also have met the condition, "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins."[5] This visible step is highly praiseworthy and beautiful, but it is the easier part of forgiveness. Far more difficult is the compliance with the requirements of the inner life, namely, reciprocal forgiveness. Said Jesus, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."[6]

---

[3] Matt. 5: 23, 24.

[4] I John 1: 9.

[5] Acts 2: 38.

More than that, the Christian system imposes upon the disciple an *aggressive* forgiveness. It would not be so difficult for most people to assume a negative attitude or the attitude of superiority, reasoning that after all, the enemy in question is not worthy of notice and that therefore each may go his way unmolested by the other. If this test were put to the average congregation, the preacher would discover many with a willingness to worship side by side with their enemies, assuming this negative aspect. But this is not Christian. The same attitude could be taken by a Mohammedan, a Confucianist, or even by a worldling disposed to avoid open conflict for the sake of social decency. Jesus provides that forgiveness shall be positive and aggressive. Neither the Golden Rule nor the principle of forgiveness negatively applied measures up to the Christian ideal.

In these days we are glad to believe that there are those who make this principle operative in the great field of industry. For example, a layman of my own congregation applied it to an offending employee who, over a period of months, had stolen from the company several hundreds of dollars. This Christian layman would have been wholly within the law had he committed the offender to jail. But he agreed to retain the services of the guilty man upon the condition that he and his wife repay the company a stipulated sum per month until the entire stolen amount was equalled. This Christian treatment was irresistible. It literally changed the offender's heart. He became one of the most trusted employees of the firm and remained so for twenty-five subsequent years.

---

[6] Matt. 6: 15.

The social implications of this great principle are tremendous. Jesus instructed that if one aggressively sought reconciliation with an offending brother and was refused, he take another with him, and yet another, "and if he refuse them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church let him be as the heathen and a publican."[7] Plainly, the impact of the larger group is thus brought to play upon the hardened attitude of the person in question. Is it not quite impossible to study this social ideal and not feel that such mighty agencies as the League of Nations, the World Court and the Kellogg Pact are finally applying the social teachings of Jesus after nineteen hundred years of waiting? With this spirit dominating a nation, such a mood as expressed in "hymns of hate" will be impossible and war will be outlawed in the international mind.

It will be noted that Jesus bases His forgiveness upon the assumption of ignorance, saying, "for they know not what they do." They did not know that they had crucified the Christ. To some of them He was an impostor; in the eyes of others He had perverted the nation and had forbidden the giving of tribute to Cæsar. Others protested that He had called Himself the Christ, the King, the Son of God, and had stirred up the people by His teaching. Perhaps many, of whom it is not recorded, later came to say as did one of the spectators, "Truly, this man was the Son of God." After all, men hate each other and nations fly at each other's throats because of ignorance and misunderstanding. In the field of religious controversy it is equally true. Fundamentalists and modernists have chosen to engage in a war of words at times as vicious and as poisonous to the sensitive soul as war with swords. "In a very true sense, all injustice is due to ignorance, and ignorance calls for the tender care of a physician rather than the ferocity of an executioner."[8] It is, therefore, the duty of the church to lead the state to this higher plane of ethics. Until we come to practice literally the prayer of Christ, we must continue to confess with Francis Quarles,

---

[7] Matt. 18: 17.

> "We are cruel, Lord, to Thee and ourselves too;
> Jesu, forgive us; we know not what we do."

---

[8] Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VI, p. 82.

The Second Word

"This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."
—Luke 23:43.

CHAPTER III

A Trialogue on Repentance

THE trialogue on the Cross drives us back to another processional which moved from Pilate's judgment hall to the place of the skull. It was only six days before that the new king, not borne on a podium but sitting erect on a humble beast, rode in royal modesty over palms and garments amid the shouts of triumph. Now He walks alone under the weight of a Cross and with choruses of vicious and jeering words pouring into His ears.

Today the credulous pilgrim is led along the Via Dolorosa to fourteen traditional stations of the Cross among which are the Ecce Homo Arch, the Chapel of the Scourging and the life-size statue of Jesus bending under His load. Pilgrims by the thousands have paused before these spots in sympathetic meditation. Was it Providence that lost to us all but a few square feet of the Via Dolorosa, whose Roman stones reached from Pilate's judgment hall to Golgotha somewhere outside the city walls? What matters most is not the road or the place of the skull, whether it be Gordon's Calvary or Helena's under the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; rather we are here concerned about the atmosphere of the city, the unusual procession and the words which came from the three crosses at the end of that hectic journey.

The whole city was permeated with the spirit of celebration. Preparation for the Passover feast was in full sway. Pilgrims in long caravans had arrived from all corners of the land. Hundreds of lambs had been slain and their skins were drying on the roofs of many houses. In every home, presumably, there was a lamb waiting for the fire, while the housewife was busy preparing herbs and fruits for the family meal to be eaten as an expression of thanksgiving to Jehovah. It is suggested that from the chimney of every home along the dolorous way which Jesus was traveling, a curl of smoke arose only to be swallowed up in the clear air of the vaulted skies, bearing testimony to the sacredness of the Passover feast to be observed by the enemies of Jesus.

But there was another spirit, namely, that of the mob. What a mob it was that jostled its way over the stony streets up to the hill of crucifixion! No two reporters seem to have caught alike all the scenes. Only Luke mentions the "women who bewailed and lamented Him" as they pushed their way among the strong-armed men to get a closer view of the Cross-bearer. The taking of a life always attracts the crowd, and it is little wonder that "there followed Him a great multitude of people." It must have been quite impossible for the authorities to keep secret the fact that, after a night of scheming, they at last had found a means whereby He could be crucified. Three of the reporters watched Jesus as He weakened and fell under the load, and made note of how Simon, the father of Rufus and Alexander, two later disciples, got under the load with Jesus. At the end of the journey, John joined the other three in reporting the case of the two malefactors. In the language of Harriett Monroe,

> "Three crosses rose on Calvary against the iron sky,
> Each with its living burden, each with its human cry.
> And all ages watched there, and there were you and I."

The first to speak is the unyielding railer who, through his pain, shouts out the question, "Art not thou the Christ? Save thyself and us." His overtaxed heart must have been crowded with a mingled feeling of sin, jealousy and wrath. No doubt, as he bore his own cross along the way he had seen Simon of Cyrene coming to the relief of Jesus, but no one gave him aid. He remembers some of the miracles and is aware of the fact that Jesus had called Himself king of the Jews and the Saviour of the world. Now, thinks he, Make good your claim. Wholly impervious to the totally different mood of the man he addresses and without any response in his soul to what this companion sufferer had to offer, he faces death with the reckless habit which he had acquired in life.

Is he not typical of many who, today, go to the gallows or to the electric chair with unyielding spirits? Neither must we forget that there were others about him who were equally unresponsive to the appeal of Jesus. Such were the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the priests, the moralists and many others who had heard His teachings with equal unconcern. There are about us today those who have heard preaching all their lives, are sermon-hardened and who likewise close the doors of their hearts to the spiritual appeal. It is a terrible thing to have a heart like that, a heart like a spring which has lost its resiliency. To such the story of Good Friday will fall each year on deaf ears.

On the other side of Jesus is a criminal with a totally different heart. Instantly he hurls this searching question at his fellow, "Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation, and we, indeed, justly; for we received the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss?"

Obviously, here is a heart that has not wholly lost its sensitiveness to better things. Whatever his crime, he has not forgotten the tender years of youth when, as many other lads now in the city, he had accompanied his parents to the temple to eat the feast of the Passover. He has not lost his sense of justice and now, perhaps, for the first time is conscious of the fact that "the way of the transgressor is hard" and that "whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap." Who has not met with such as he? Neither are they all in prison. Many of them are at large upon our streets. They have not wholly lost their regard for righteousness. They have only escaped the penalty of the law.

It is not impossible that this man may have been an occasional or even a semi-regular attendant at the synagogue. Woe unto the pulpit which makes it easy for men to indulge in sin and be not too greatly disturbed in conscience even while under the preacher's voice. May it not be that the pulpit needs more of the vigorous and pungent preaching of John the Baptist, who thundered out to his auditors "Repent, for the kingdom is at hand"; or of Paul, who, with the power of his great soul, cried "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord?" Soft and smooth platitudes may be acceptable to greater numbers, "sellers of rhetoric" may have their place, but no man will be forgiven by either God or, in the end, by the sinner himself, if he fails to warn men of the folly of transgressing the laws of God.

With penitent soul this malefactor implores the suffering Saviour, saying, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He, too, had borne his cross while Simon went to the aid of Jesus, but it aroused no jealousy within him. Neither could he forget the innocence of this fellow-sufferer or those wondrous first words—"Father, forgive them." Throwing himself upon the mercy of Christ, he penitently begs, "Remember me."

Here, again, we find a fruitful field for the theologian. To those who wish, it opens up a whole array of questions. Can there be such a thing as "eleventh hour" repentance? Can one be forgiven who has not gone through the routine of a covenant relationship with Christ? In the eyes of St. Augustine he might be received, but could he avoid intermediate suffering in proportion to the gravity of his crime? Others ask, How could he possibly be accepted of Christ without having fulfilled the initial conditions taught by the Apostles and so long practiced by the church? Still others raise the question of the time element, of an upper and lower station, and ask, In what particular theory of the atonement did the thief believe? Then comes the whole interpretation of repentance. In the thought of the later Roman theologians emotionalism accompanied genuine repentance. With them the whole process became inextricably associated with church discipline and with the overt act of penance. The reformers sought to disentangle the subject from its ecclesiastical inheritance and to restore it to the simple New Testament emphasis, conceived as the mental process by which the change is made from a negative to a positive attitude toward God.

Reduced to its simpler terms, repentance is an attitude of mind toward God which makes it possible for Him to bestow His benefits of forgiveness upon the offender. The alien must return to the Father before he can receive the paternal blessings which await him. "In repenting," says Samuel McComb, "the sinner tears down the barriers which his sin erects between him and the in-flow of divine life and power."[1] One malefactor refuses to remove the barriers; the other puts them out of the way, thus opening the channel for the response of Christ.

Finally, come the last words in the trialogue from the lips of Jesus, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." MacLaren, in classifying the words of the Master from Pilate's hall to Calvary, remarks that Jesus plays the three-fold part of prophet, priest and king. He was prophet when He said to the women along the way, "The time cometh when they shall say, Blessed are the barren"; He was priest when He said, "Father, forgive them"; now, in the forgiveness of the penitent, he assumes the role of king.

Paradise, they tell us, was borrowed from the Persians whose gardens were among the most beautiful in the world. What their paradise was to the satisfaction of the physical eye and the comfort and pleasure of the body, spiritual paradise is to those who gain the favor of God. What simpler figure could Jesus have used to bring assurance to a penitent thief in the last moments of his suffering? One sometimes wonders if one could get as much understanding and comfort from the complex requirements of salvation as set up by the church in subsequent years. May it not be that a débris of ecclesiastical requirements has closed the door to many a sinner who longs to return to God?

---

[1] Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. X, p. 734.

In spite of the thrill in this spectacular conversion, and notwithstanding the satisfaction in being able to assure every transgressor that it is never too late to repent, the fact is that the world does not need any encouragement toward procrastination. Some of our forefathers philosophized that "one was saved on the Cross that none might despair; and only one that none might presume." Wholly apart from the technical question of theology, there is good psychology as well as good practical religion in pressing the slogan, "Do it now." When one realizes how large a percentage of Christians enter the church in their teens and twenties, how rapidly the percentage decreases in the thirties and forties and how pitifully few ever profess Christ after fifty and sixty, one sees the urgency of always preaching for a verdict as deliberately as the lawyer who pleads a case before a jury.

As we leave the scene, two rigid facts stare us in the face. The first of these is that all men have the power of choice. The malefactors had an equal chance. To be sure, their experiences and backgrounds may have been radically different, but their final opportunities were the same. One repents and the other does not. Nevertheless, Jesus does not coerce. He only gives opportunity.

The second fact is that the attitude of Jesus on the Cross parallels the attitude of His whole ministry. He was sensitive to those who mocked Him and refused Him. While taunting words pierced His heart more poignantly than the nails had pierced His hands and feet, nevertheless, He was wholly without capacity to carry in His memory the antagonism of men. On the other hand, He was constantly on the lookout for, and His soul was always sensitive to, every favorable attitude toward what He had to offer. With unfailing accuracy His soul registered each word and sign of a penitent. Though spoken in a whisper and in any tongue, He understands the heart of him who says "Remember me," and sends back the assuring answer, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The Third Word

"Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother."
—John 19:26, 27.

CHAPTER IV

The Rising Star of Womankind

NONE but a woman's voice could do justice to that part of Theodore Dubois' immortal cantata in the third word which portrays Mary at the foot of the Cross. More than that, none but a mother could fully interpret the scene described in the words to which the composer has set those emotional strains of *Stabat Mater:*

> "At the Cross her station keeping,
> Stood the mournful mother weeping,
> Where He hung, her son, and Lord."

In the previous scene one easily visualizes the two malefactors with the motley crowd trudging up the dolorous way in the exact position required of criminals; but Mary, the mother of Jesus, must be left to follow her own deepest desires. No one would assume to assign to her a place in the order of the day, but one could easily guess that the tenderness of the mother heart would keep her within speaking distance of her son during every step of the way. Neither is it strange that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" was the one who, alone, records this tenderest scene and preserves for us the significant words of the Master—"Woman, Behold thy son! Behold thy mother!"

We are told that "from that hour the disciple took her into his own home." Whether or not this is to be interpreted that John instantly led her away from the Cross that she might be spared the harrowing experience of witnessing these last agonizing hours or that she might not be singled out in the crowd as the deepest sympathizer is left wholly to conjecture. That John ever after extended to her as nearly as he was capable the tender consideration to which she had been accustomed to receive from her own son was to be expected from "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

So far as history records Mary now passes out of the picture. But knowing as we do from experience the beautiful devotion of motherhood and also the tenderness of Jesus toward the home, the temptation to supply the missing chapters is almost irresistible. The artist, the poet and the dramatist have at times succumbed. Perhaps the pageant has taken the greatest liberties. Mary has been portrayed as one mad with grief and wholly without self-control. But one likes to think of the mother of Jesus as a woman of superior quality who could suffer the intensest pain occasioned by these indescribably cruel hours and yet could conceal most of it within her own heart. One rejoices to believe that just as she accepted the fact of her unusual motherhood with an inner joy under perfect control so she also must have met this unusual bereavement. Is it too much to venture beyond the mere facts of history and ask, Was not her sorrow somewhat dispelled by the dim yet growing consciousness that the death of her Son and His calm acceptance of it lifted the whole affair above the ordinary and the common; that after all, His Cross would have a farther reach of influence than any other she had known; that womankind, indeed all the race would become the beneficiary of that event? Had she not known that memorable day when in Galilee He set His face steadfastly toward Jerusalem? Did she not discern something of the hidden meaning in those words of His which were so imperfectly understood by even His most astute Apostles when He said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it bring forth much fruit?"[1]

No part of our religion has been subjected to more theological speculation and abuse than that which has to do with Mary. It began early after the Apostolic era. St. Augustine was among those who held the theory that John typified all believers and that Mary, therefore, became the universal mother of the church. Tradition has it that John was unmarried. Jerome delighted in interpreting this to mean that "the virgin mother was commended by the virgin Lord to the virgin disciple, John." In the second and third centuries certain men began to emphasize the place which Mary held in Christian experience. Prominent among these was Irenæus, Greek bishop of Lyons. After Constantine, her place in the thought of the church rapidly increased. Both Greeks and Romans all but made her co-redeemer with Jesus. Festivals arose in her honor. As Eve was accepted to be the mother of sin, so Mary became the mother of redemption. The Council of Bishops at Ephesus in 431 A.D. placed Maryology in the list of essentials to orthodoxy and its non-acceptance was branded as heresy. It was only a short step from this point to actual worship of the mother of Jesus and Maryolatry was established. Following this, came images of Mary to which miracles were later attributed. Hymnology was likewise affected until "almost every pater noster had its Ave Maria." From the position that the mother of Jesus herself was free from actual sin, the notion arose that she was born without original sin, the theory which now goes by the theological term "immaculate conception." In the year 1854 this theory was placed as an article of faith in the tenets of the Roman Church.[2]

---

[1] John 12: 24.

The Reformation stoutly repudiated these positions, calling attention to the fact that Mary's name is mentioned but once in the New Testament after the gospel story closes. This was after the ascension of Jesus when "these all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."[3] On the occasion when His speaking was interrupted by one who came stating that His mother was without and wished to speak to Him, He replied, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother."[4]

---

[2] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, pp. 409-428.

But to neglect the human side of the story is to rob it of the very heart of the Cross in its relation to the women of the world. According to Luke, Mary's experience begins with the annunciation when in her girlhood home in Nazareth she heard the angelic voice saying, "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. . . . And of his kingdom there shall be no end."[5]

Her overwhelming joy is expressed in the *Magnificat* which follows. The proud moment of her motherhood arrived when, in a manger hewn out of

---

[3] Acts 1: 14.
[4] Matt. 12: 46 ff.
[5] Luke 1: 31-33.

Judaean sandstone, Jesus was born at Bethlehem. Here she showed all the ecstasies of normal motherhood plus the added joy in the fact that her son was born to become the Saviour of men. To the wise men from the East she served as hostess with dignity and womanly modesty. She performed all the duties of a devout Jewish mother, taking her infant son to the temple for the rite of circumcision on the eighth day. To avoid the results of Herod's edict—that all male children under two years of age should be put out of the way, Mary took her child and, seated on the same species of animal on which He later rode triumphantly into the Holy City, she finally found hiding in the land of the Pharaohs. Then came the announcement of Herod's death and, after another weary and longer journey, they took up their abode in Nazareth where she and Joseph assumed all the duties of the strictest Jewish parentage. During His years of youth and young manhood, it was one of her greatest delights to watch her Son "advance in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." From the time of His visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve to the hour of His crucifixion, Mary is completely lost to our sight except as our imagination is allowed to play about the carpenter's home, the shop and the town spring. Therefore, whatever else may be said, Mary brings to this hour of the Cross all the anxieties, affections and ambitions of a normal mother.

It is quite impossible to think of the mother of Jesus in her sorrow and keep out of one's mind the mother of His betrayer. Where was she on that dark night when, in the garden, her son printed the kiss of betrayal on the cheek of Mary's son? Did she forsake her boy during the hours of his remorse when his fevered brain had become so confused as to rob him of consecutive thought? What part might she have played in his attempt to retract and clear himself by returning to the priests the thirty pieces of silver? Where was she when this most despised of men walked out to get away from that terrible nightmare which haunted him by hurling himself to his death?

The poet pictures Mary moving about under the olive trees one day, watching the children about their play and seeing a little Christ in every face. Presently another woman appears and interests herself in the story of her new-found friend as she talks about her son from the day of His infancy to the day of His tragic end. It is discovered that this strange woman, too, had a son for whom she was ambitious and in whom she seemed to take a parallel pride. According to the poetic imagination of Agnes Lee:

"Then Mary whispered: 'Tell me thou
Of thine.' And she:
'Oh, mine was rosy as a bough
Blooming with roses, sent, somehow
To bloom for me!
His balmy fingers left a thrill
Deep in my breast that warms me still.'
Then she gazed down some wilder, darker hour
And said—when Mary questioned, knowing not:
'Who art thou, mother of so sweet a flower?'—
'I am the mother of Iscariot.' "

In the heart of every normal mother God has planted many beautiful flowers of promise. In them she sees a future wreath that will some day crown the head of her child with glory. Pity upon her whose son, like Judas, is bedecked with shame instead.

But back to the Cross, to the words—"Woman, Behold thy son!" By all the laws of filial tenderness Jesus should have used the term "mother" with which He had addressed her for thirty consecutive years. But this is a new hour in His career. Indeed, from the beginning of His ministry His love exceeded the bounds of His home even as it did the bounds of His nation. It was at the marriage ceremony in Cana that He had addressed His mother by the term "woman" and here at the Cross He employs it again. He had progressed from the son of Mary to the Son of Man and the Son of God.

His concern for His mother at the Cross epitomized His whole attitude toward womankind during the three years of His ministry. This new attitude was met by a new response. Even His disciples marveled at His unusual concern for womankind. They could scarcely understand why He should disregard all custom and speak to a half-blood Jewess at Jacob's Well. But by so doing, He put new hope into her soul. The one who had been lifted from a character of the street to a self-respecting member of society, found her way into the home where Jesus was being entertained, broke the alabaster box of precious ointment, poured it on the head of her benefactor, washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her own flowing hair. The women whom He had befriended and had given a new hope in life included Mary and Martha at whose home in Bethany He was a frequent guest and the Canaanite woman whose faith He found to excel that of many in Israel. Is it any wonder that Luke should record the names of "Certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary that was called Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered unto Him of their substance?"[6] Neither is it strange that these into whose lives He had brought new hope should have been first at the tomb.

Nineteen centuries have vindicated the philosophy of Jesus regarding woman. He surprised His compeers and subjected Himself to bitter criticism by placing high values on her life, because there was no spot in the world of His day that considered her other than a slave. The penal code of Babylon provided that "if a husband say unto his wife, Thou art not my wife, he shall pay half a mina and be free; but if a woman repudiate her husband, she shall be drowned in the river."[7] Had Mary gone as far into Egypt as Luxor with her infant Christ she could have looked upon the ruins of a temple built fourteen centuries before by the father-in-law of King Tutankhamen, who was called father by sixty children and whose harem contained one thousand women. Greek culture which had slipped into Palestine brought with it no cheer to women. The Temple of Mystery located along the sacred way out of Athens, to which Greek men of renown went for initiation, could have told stories of moral debauchery paralleling that of Cleopatra, in whose veins flowed both Egyptian and Grecian blood. In Rome, from which Pilate had inherited his ideals of womanhood, though they were far superior to many others, women reckoned their ages by the number of their husbands instead of years. As John Lord put it, "paganism froze her soul" so that from her came no music, no art, no literature and no painting. The greatest rôle she could possibly play was that of being slave to man. Even Judaea remembered Solomon with his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines and, according to the school of Hillel, the spoiling of a husband's dinner was ground for divorce.

---

[6] Luke 8: 1-3.

[7] Hastings, *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. II, p. 834.

With such a background comes the new teacher proclaiming a revolutionary parity of the sexes and a new dignity for the home. When the orthodox Pharisees came to trap Him on the question of divorce, He replied, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. I say unto you whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication and shall marry another committeth adultery."[8] With a new standard of companionship based upon the strictest moral integrity, Jesus lifts the home to a plane heretofore unknown and ushers in a single standard of marital conduct.

After nineteen centuries save two years, two hundred and forty disciples from every race under the sun gathered at the Jerusalem conference to see how far the teachings of Jesus had reached and to plan for greater conquests. Here both women and men, enjoying equal rights in the kingdom and in the affairs of the world, stood on Mt. Olivet where Jesus prayed, "Not my will but thine be done." Within gun shot of the very spot where He was crucified, they caught a new perspective of their religious task. Among the many epoch-making pronouncements were those of the Christian women who had come from many lands to testify that Christ had freed their sex from the inequality and the slavery of centuries. Let a single characteristic sentence from Miss Psi Tsing, a Chinese Christian in attendance, represent the testimony of millions of brown, black and yellow women. Said she, "In Christ there is no distinction between men and women, and He has set the same moral standards for both sexes. Christ has given woman life, soul and the way to come to God."[9]

---

[8] Matt. 19: 8, 9.

For nineteen hundred years Christ has been the one hope of womankind. In India, before His spirit the Suttee and Purdah are disappearing and the caste system is being broken down. Brutal polygamy is being supplanted by monogamy in Africa; and the rest of enslaved womanhood awaits His coming. Putting itself in John's stead the manhood of the world is responding heroically to the words of Jesus, "Behold thy mother."

---

[9] Mathews, *Roads to the City of God*, p. 41.

The Fourth Word

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
—Matthew 27:46.

CHAPTER V

The Loneliness of Leadership

THREE hours of densest darkness follow the first three words of the suffering Christ. What was it? Stier dismisses the incident with the mere statement that profane history records both an earthquake and an eclipse. Edersheim, on the other hand, reckons that it was during full moon and, therefore, could not possibly have been an eclipse. Those who look for the technical fulfillment of prophecy turn to Amos and read, "He will cause the sun to go down at noon and will darken the earth in the clear day."[1] With a flash of rhetoric Papini sees only:

> "A thick cloud, dark as though it came from the marshes of hell, rising above the hills and little by little spreading to every corner of the horizon. Black clouds gathered about the sun, that sweet, clear April sun, which had warmed the hands of the murderers, encircled it, laid siege to it, and finally covered it with a thick curtain of darkness."[2]

There are those who, like MacLaren, look upon the incident as a sympathetic response of nature, "as if

---

[1] Amos 8: 9.

[2] Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 370.

God had hung a piece of crepe in the skies, thus draping the heavens in mourning for the sinfulness of man."[3] Who knows? It was dark; no sun, no moon, no star and no bolt of lightning broke through that dense cloud.

Who was it that tarried at the Cross during those black hours? At this point the records are as dark as were the hours themselves. To be sure the Roman soldiers must be on duty to protect the interests of the state. The ecclesiastics would stay tenaciously by until this blasphemer had drawn his last breath. Only John does not record the scene. Had he hurried Mary away against her wishes that she might not be compelled to pass through that awful pall of silence?

With the return of the sun, the pale and weakened Jesus breaks the spell, crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the presence of this scene both students of prophecy and lovers of theology have pitched their tents. In the eyes of the former, the twenty-second Psalm lends itself in almost complete detail to the facts of the Cross. The opening sentence contains the exact words of Jesus. It has been suggested that but for waning strength, He would have uttered the entire Psalm as David's revelation of the whole crucifixion scene.

Those who hold to the substitutionary theory of the atonement, find here a complete justification of their belief that for these tragic moments God looked upon His Son as a typical sinner, wholly without any touch with the higher life. As we shall see in a later chapter, one of the many crosses subsequently used to symbolize Christianity has its lower beam pointing toward the earth. The Russian Church has employed this downward slant to symbolize that part of the ancient creed which reads, "He descended into hell." As for Luther, he considered Jesus during these moments as "suffering the fear and dishonor of a tortured conscience and tasting wrath." However, one searches in vain Christ's own interpretation of the Father's mood for even a suggestion of such an attitude toward any offender of His laws. In that greatest of all the parables, *The Prodigal Son,* God is portrayed as possessing a wholly different mood.

---

[3] **MacLaren, *Expositions of the Holy Scriptures*, Matt., p. 324.**

Jesus is now passing through another Gethsemane. In the garden He had cried, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me," but He had never lost the consciousness of His Father's presence. On the Cross He seems to have lost sight entirely of His Father's companionship. In the words of Stier, "there the Lord came to the bounds of obedience" and here "the hardest and profoundest temptation drives Him to the bounds of faith."[4] In Gethsemane He recoiled from the cup; here He drinks its contents to the last dregs. His mood was human; like a traveler dying on the desert with nothing about him but his helpless camel and the stretching dunes of sand, Jesus is dying without the conscious sympathy of either God or man.

---

[4] Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus,* p. 677.

So radical a change in the Master's status among men must needs tax His human nature to the breaking point. He had passed swiftly from the position of the conqueror to that of the conquered; from the rôle of the victor to that of victim. For three consecutive years He was master of every situation. He had calmed the waves, healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead to life. Six days before, He was a king, thronged by a multitude of admirers; now He is a deserted criminal on a Cross of shame.

Furthermore, Jesus is a lonely sufferer. Despite the fact that there were three companion victims, neither could lessen the pain of the other in the least degree. Love Him as they may, His mother and His most ardent supporters are unable to share the pain which began with the driving of the nails into His hands and feet while the day was yet young but which, like an electric bolt, is shattering every nerve. They are not unlike the thousands who at this very moment keep vigil at the bedside of their sick, pathetically conscious of their limitations. As these lines are being written, a young man in my own parish lies in a nearby hospital slowly fighting his way back to health. After months of great discouragement and despair his physicians say he now has an even chance of recovery. He has known all through those long stretches of empty time that there were five hundred other young men of his class ready to go the length of human possibility to share his pain. They have furnished daily words of comfort to his anxious parents and flowers of brotherliness for his own encouragement, but he knows that beyond this point they cannot go. Paul touched the same irrevocable law in another sphere when, in one breath, he said to the members of the Galatian Church, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" and in another, "Every man shall bear his own burden."[5]

But most of all, Jesus is plainly experiencing the loneliness of leadership. Not long before, Peter had deserted Him as the cock began to crow the third time. Matthew tells us that during the series of trials "all His disciples left Him and fled." Theirs, of course, was a different desertion than was that of Judas, but they had deserted Him nevertheless. They had fallen victims to weakening wills and failing courage, while Judas had experienced a complete snapping of the moral fibre of his soul.

Here is reënacted the loneliness of the whole three years of his leadership, raised to the *n*th degree.

---

[5] Gal. 6: 2, 5.

When He showed affection toward little children He was quite alone; when He befriended womanhood which had never before had a chance, even His disciples misunderstood Him. If He stopped to challenge the better natures of vile men or went home to dine with Zacchaeus, He was accused of improper motives and of eating with sinners. He was always alone because He was leagues ahead of even His most discerning Apostles. In one of the most decisive moments of His life when He sorely needed the human touch, He left the inner circle of three in the garden and went away to pray alone, for they could not understand His battle. In the language of MacLaren, "He longs for human companionship, however uncomprehensive, and stretches out His hand in the great darkness, to feel the touch of a hand of flesh and blood and, alas, for poor feeble love! He gropes for it in vain."[6] As majestic Matterhorn towers alone above the lesser Alpine peaks which hold companionship with each other, so great souls stand alone above the common herd.

It is ever thus. The prophet, the idealist, the seer, the reformer and the pioneer missionary—all pass into like dark periods of solitude. Were there ever more lonely statesmen than Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson? When Lincoln uttered those immortal words in the old State House in Illinois—"A house divided against itself cannot stand" and "No nation can endure half slave and half free," he was leagues ahead of even his closest friends. He attached his signature to the Emancipation Proclamation and freed the slaves, but it led to a martyr's grave. When Woodrow Wilson sat in the council of nations in Paris and dared to affirm that war had run its course and that "a new wind was blowing through the world," he, too, stood quite alone. European statesmen whose nations had participated in many conflicts felt that wars must always be. Here was a statesman who saw a better way, but he stood alone. This modern prophet of peace was also far ahead of his own countrymen, and after a prolonged illness he, too, died a martyr to his ideals of brotherhood and understanding.

---

[6] MacLaren, *Expositions of Holy Scriptures*, Luke, p. 238.

So it has been in the missionary enterprise. Livingstone, Moffatt, Morrison, Shelton—indeed, all the pioneers had their hours of solitude. I shall not soon forget my experience with a missionary in the heart of India. It was past the midnight hour; mission boards around the world had been mercilessly cutting budgets and advocating retrenchment. We had been talking about the moral effect of this retrenchment on the missionaries themselves—these heroes and heroines who had actually taken of their pitifully small salaries to offset the suspensions by the home base. In the midst of it, this missionary-statesman stopped and, piercing my very soul with his searching eyes, asked, "Is it worth while for us to hold the trenches until we get more help from home?" Though I represented that home base and was seated by his side, in point of missionary vision he was far ahead of me and therefore alone. So it is and so it ever will be. It is the price of leadership.

But after all, Jesus was not alone. God was with Him and the very stars that fought against Sisera were fighting for His cause. After the resurrection His disciples regained their courage and went out to die for Him. Now His kingdom encompasses the earth. Lincoln was not alone. God was nearer than the midnight messenger who brought to him the latest news from his struggling armies. Now all the civilized world is free and the name of the Emancipator is emblazoned among the immortals. Wilson was not alone. As the God of battles walked with Saul now the God of peace stands by his side. The strange new wind which blew across the council table has gained an irresistible velocity. It has swept through the corridors of every civilized capital in the world, whipping more than half a hundred nations into a pact to have done with war. The missionary is not alone. God walks beside every loyal one of these ambassadors of Christ, from the coffee belts of Africa to the plateau of Tibet on "the roof of the world." No honest disciple is alone in his loftiest aspirations. Be he layman, humble prophet on the country crossroads or mouthpiece of God in a city church; obscure teacher of sun-tanned children or dreaming poet who sings the tenderest sentiments of life; mother who keeps the humblest home or queen who sits upon the highest throne—none is really alone as he leads toward the goal of righteousness. After the spell of darkness, the sun shines again and yet again, and he who listens will hear the resurrected Master saying, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The Fifth Word

"I Thirst."—John 19:28.

CHAPTER VI

The Cup of Water and the Springing Well

THOSE who have sat under the spell of the great cantata, *The Seven Last Words,* will remember that in one of the longest of that series of marvelous compositions, Dubois devotes but six measures to Christ's own words. The baritone opens the production with the single subdued strain —"I thirst." The tenor follows, saying, "And the Jews that passed by Him mocked and reviled Him; they wagged their heads and derided Him." Filling the air about the Cross with a veritable whirlwind of voices, the chorus breaks in with shrill derision, "Ha, Thou who dost destroy the temple; if Thou art Christ, Son of our God, come from the Cross and prove it; that we may see it and believe Thee. If Thou art king of the Jews, save Thyself now."[1] Only once is this frenzied chorus interrupted by the words of Jesus. Having spent their venom in an attempt to shred the heart of the Christ, the chorus ceases and the faint words "I thirst" float again over the waiting crowd.

---

[1] Matt. 37: 42.

If there is any one of the utterances of Jesus which should have escaped the scrutiny of the theologian, it is this one. But, alas! It is not so. Fortunately, however, theological speculation is largely confined to the centuries that have gone. Dr. Rudolph Stier, in his elaborate treatise published in 1864, seems to have resurrected most of the intricate theories held from the Apostolic fathers down to his own era. He delights in taking others to task for misfitting the Master's words into the prophetic psalms and the prophecies. As an example of the theologian's approach let this single quotation suffice:

> "It is perfectly self-evident that Jesus actually thirsts. . . . But to this we must add, that He declares His thirst, not merely in recollection of Scripture, as knowing that His thirsting and drinking were included among the 'all things' which, according to that Scripture, were to be accomplished, but also with an express design to accomplish that Scripture."[2]

Over against this approach are the bald facts that when Jesus cried out, "My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" He was uttering the agony of a thirsty soul; here He expresses the terrible thirst of a dying body. Crucifixion was the last word in cruelty for criminals, not only because it was the most painful but also because it provided the means whereby the revenge of the persecutors might be satisfied over the longest period of time. Some clung to life far into the second day; the average was twelve hours. Jesus, worn and weary by five days of intense living, a sleepless night filled with harrowing experiences and mock trials, followed by the exhausting trudge up the hill with His Cross, had already become well nigh depleted in strength before a single nail was driven. So it was that far sooner than most men, He approached the end, saying in feeble tones, "I thirst." If in life "it behooved Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren," it was equally so in death. In the words of Bishop Slattery, "He touched all the common joys and sorrows, and with His touch they have become divine."[3]

---

[2] Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus*, p. 682.

It is quite impossible for one to be either a soldier or a minister without seeing this physical thirst paralleled many times. How many wounded soldiers in the last great war cried out for water to cool their fevered lips while lying on an inhospitable battlefield waiting for the rescue squad? I remember a parishioner describing her prolonged agony after a major operation. So frantic had she become for water that when the nurse left the room, she groped for the ice which had been placed upon her head to allay the fever. He who has held the cup of water in scenes like these thoroughly understands this physical outcry of Jesus.

---

[3] Slattery, *Words From the Throne*, p. 70.

It was only a short time before that someone "gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and when He had tasted it He would not drink."[4] Edersheim reminds us that there was a guild of tenderhearted Jewish women who provided this mild narcotized solution for those who were unfortunate enough to suffer crucifixion. But rather than face death in a state of stupor, Jesus chose to retain His full consciousness to the end. These seven words, therefore, were issued out of a clear mind though spoken by a body that was suffering intensest agony. Had He yielded to this potion, the story of the tragedy would probably have been incomplete and the world denied some of His richest messages. His prayer of forgiveness, His sympathetic expression for His mother and the answer to the pleading words of the penitent would probably not have been uttered. John Keble's imagination describes it thus:

"Fill high the bowl, benumb His aching sense
With medicined sleep. 'O awful in Thy woe!
The parching thirst of death
Is on Thee, and Thou triest

" 'The slumberous potion bland, and wilt not drink:
Not sullen, nor in scorn, like haughty man
With suicidal hand
Putting His solace by:

---

[4] Matt. 27: 34.

"So to the end, though now of mortal pangs
Made heir, and emptied of thy glory awhile,
With unaverted eye
Thou meetest all the storm."

It is quite as impossible for men to escape the penalties of a false philosophy or of wrong conduct as it was for Jesus to escape the cost of His own principle of sacrifice. A philosophy out of harmony with the loftiest ideals of an individual or a nation is impotent to cheat permanently either the soul of the individual or the nation out of its just deserts. Frederick Nietzsche, Germany's greatest philosopher for half a century, was a child of the manse. He went out into the world with the tenderest benedictions of Christian motherhood. The false principle of the jungle that "might makes right" percolated through his being. Delicate health drove him from the life of a soldier to the career of a philosopher. Both his own and other nations became intoxicated with the idea and forty commonwealths were hurled into an indescribable conflict. As Nietzsche was driven mad and drummed the keys of his piano with his elbows, the nations went mad for four terrible years, leaving the world in physical, moral and spiritual ruin. But the loftier principle of good-will could not be put to sleep, and millions of disillusioned people on two continents are now repenting of their nation's sins.

Neither can one easily put to sleep his moral ideals. During the time Honorable Newton D. Baker was eliminating Cleveland's segregated vice district, one of its lewd women died. It chanced that a Christian attorney of my acquaintance was asked to become executor and take charge of the meagre estate of this character of the underworld. Among her possessions were many letters. One of these, an unmailed message to a friend, contained this significant statement: "I think I am having a wonderful time; but when all is said and I am alone with myself, I would gladly give the world, were it mine to give, to enjoy the peace of mind which I once possessed when we were innocent girls together." You cannot narcotize the moral ideals of youth.

Once more, a woman whose natural God-likeness has been stimulated by the Christian concept of home, cannot easily forsake it for the philosophy of companionate marriage. Many will remember the story of the young expectant mother who took her own life, leaving a revealing note to her companion with whom she had entered into such a contract. No doubt this woman had made herself believe that she was willing to accept his philosophy, but as the day of motherhood approached, her deep-seated Christian ideals must have risen from their stupor and so disturbed her peace of mind that, Judas-like, she thought to end it all by self-destruction. The fact is that when the experiment has been tried and the music has died away, when the crowd has dispersed and the revelry has ceased, when the sinner is alone with God he discovers that the drug has played him false and has left his soul in agony.

While Jesus refused to drink the myrrh in the beginning, He does accept the vinegar, a poor kind of drink used by the common people. Whose heart was it that prompted this beneficent deed? Perhaps none but a Roman soldier would assume such responsibility. Impossible? Then let us remember how the centurion, who perhaps had led the procession over the Via Dolorosa and had watched though the long hours, said, "Truly, this was the Son of God." Recall the story of Clovis the pagan, who, after listening to the reading of the crucifixion story, rose from his chair, snatched his sword from its scabbard, and said, "Oh that I had been there with my Franks!" The story of the Cross has melted many hearts. It melted his. Perhaps because of the influence of Clotilda, his Christian wife, or because of his better understanding of the principles of the Cross, he and three thousand of his soldiers were baptized in the historical cathedral of Rheims, a picture of which scene is still to be found among the historic paintings in Paris.

Here is also a touch of altruism which reaches its highest peak in the life and in the teachings of Jesus. It is not easy to study His life and evade social responsibilities. No portion of the Gospel is clearer than such sentiments as "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."[5] No one can understandingly read the parable of the Good Samaritan and selfishly enjoy his own comfort. The wonder of it is that the social gospel was so long in getting hold of the church. But it has spread its influence by degrees, and the church is the mother of our social progress. In the principle of love, social science has at last found its greatest dynamic.

One does not forget the Greek shrine at Epidauros where the gods assumed to affect cures for the sick. Neither would it be true to history to say that Christianity alone has been concerned about the suffering. The Japanese emperor, Niemi, about 663 A.D. acquired the name of Zokumelin, which by interpretation is said to be a protest against the throwing away of those critically ill.[6] Nevertheless, Christianity outstrips them all. It was during a plague in the year 374 A.D. that the dead and dying filled the streets of Edessa, Syria. Ephraim, a churchman, gathered funds, organized a company of rescuers and soon had scores of persons placed on cots, ministering to them in the name of Christ. There are those who contend that this is the first record of the organized hospital. Five years later Basil carried the idea to Cappadocia; in the year 400 A.D. Chrysostom introduced it in Constantinople; John the Almoner carried it to Alexandria in Egypt; Patrick to Ireland. The modern missionary has carried it into the neglected places of the world—Schweitzer into the coffee belts of Africa, Macklin and others into China and Shelton into far-off Tibet. Today no land where Christian missionaries have operated is without the hospital and the orphanage. They exist in response to the cry of Jesus, "I thirst," and we hear Him say "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."[7]

---

[5] Matt. 10: 42.

[6] Erskine, *Japanese Customs*, p. 84.

But there is still a greater than bodily thirst, namely of the human soul. It is quite impossible to read this story and keep from one's mind another also recorded by John. It is the story of this same Jesus, who is now crying for water, that sat upon the curb of Jacob's Well talking to a woman who had come with her water pot to quench her bodily thirst. This most interesting dialogue concludes with the words of Jesus, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; it shall be to him a well of living water springing up into everlasting life."[8] Here is the classic example of the fact that there is a thirst which Jacob's Well could not quench. "These springs," writes MacLaren, "by reason of their externality, will sooner or later be broken cisterns that can hold no water."[9]

---

[7] Matt. 25: 40.
[8] John 4: 13, 14.

This is the church's greatest task—to satisfy the spiritual thirst of man by offering him the abundant life. In the midst of a beautiful altruism it is possible that the church may fail to lead the thirsty of soul to the water of life.

Knowing Mr. Gandhi's sympathetic attitude toward Christianity, I ventured to ask him in Bombay which of the three types of missions had most greatly benefitted his people—the educational, the altruistic or the simple evangelistic. Half reclining on his oriental mat and with a voice that was none too strong yet clear, he replied, "As I understand it, Christianity began as a spiritual religion, but I very much fear that it has deteriorated into a commercial thing." When I asked for an explanation of this strange statement, he said, "I recently came into possession of the annual report of one of the denominations operating in my country. It was filled with figures, figures tabulating the number of dollars spent and the number of converts made. By the simple process of mathematics, it meant that so many dollars resulted in so many converts." He then plead for the spiritualizing of the missionary enterprise. I have asked myself a thousand times, Is the spiritual note in my own ministry the dominant one? Is my church a veritable spring of spiritual water refreshing the inner lives of those who enter it? Do I fulfill the promise of Jesus when He said, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled"? Was not Emily Dickinson right when she said:

---

[9] MacLaren, *Expositions of the Scriptures*, John, p. 206.

"We thirst at first—'tis nature's act,
And later when we die
A little water supplicate
Of fingers going by.

"It intimates the finer words
Whose adequate supply
Is that greater water in the West
Termed Immortality."

The Sixth Word

"It is finished."—John 19:30.

CHAPTER VII

The Completed Life and the Incomplete Task

THESE are words that herald a triumphant death. They suggest completeness, achievement, finality. It is as if a sculptor had struck his chisel to the marble for the last time; as if the artist had put the last touch of color upon the canvas of his masterpiece. Finished! It is the word used by the poet after laboring over the phraseology of his poem until willing to pass it on to the world; the word of a composer after completing the last bar of a great symphony. But when Jesus said, "It is finished," it signified both defeat and victory. For six hours He has been drinking great drafts from the cup of death. Now He comes to the last drop.

In a few short minutes the Son of Man will be dead and the mob will go back to the city to catch up the threads of the daily routine. The Herodians, interested not in religion but in politics, can now believe that Cæsar's power in this Roman colony is once more assured. His rival king will be out of the way. The Pharisees and Zealots who had sacrificed a whole night of sleep can now lie down in peace and, except for the haunting nightmare of a cruel deed to break the spell, can feel that their religion has been freed from the most disturbing influence it had ever encountered. As for His disciples, they will go back over the dolorous way with an overpowering sense of disappointment and with the slow measures of a funeral dirge ringing through the corridors of their souls. Mary, sorrowful yet with the mind of the introvert, if she has not already done so, will return to her humble carpenter's home, talking little, but again "treasuring these things in her heart" as she had done thirty years before. But, alas, poor Judas! with the rattle of thirty coins thrown at the feet of the chief priests and elders on the floor of the sanctuary ringing in his ears, had already gone out to his voluntary death. The sun of that tragic day sets on his mutilated body resting in the potter's field.

But associated with the physical fact of the death of Jesus there was a greater meaning. His work on earth was done. At the Well of Sychar when His disciples offered Him food, He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to accomplish His work."[1] His work was to teach and to live. His teaching was not as that of the scribes and the Pharisees. The most discerning said of it, "Never man so spake." His Sermon on the Mount is today the greatest social and moral document in the language of man. Little wonder that it has gripped men outside the church. Mahatma Gandhi gives it a literal interpretation and succeeds in living it beyond many professed disciples. If Christ's half billion followers would personify the Sermon on the Mount in their lives, they would convert great areas of the world into a veritable paradise over night.

---

[1] John 4: 34.

Jesus had also finished the task of revealing the heart of God in His own personal conduct. To some, like the rugged centurion, His winsome yet virile behavior was irresistible. Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, had been watching Him long before His trial. As the climax approached, she hurried a nervous word to the judgment hall of her husband, saying, "Have nothing to do with this righteous man." For three years He had been "tempted in all points like as we are and yet without sin." Now it is a perfect life that is finished.

Furthermore, Jesus had completed the work of a noble galaxy of men in their search for God. For example, he had climaxed the law of Moses which had dominated a nation from the time of Mt. Sinai to that very hour. And how great a code it was! It far transcended the laws of Greece and Rome. Jesus had obeyed it in every detail. He also said, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill, for verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in nowise pass away from the law until all things be accomplished."[2] The law had run its course. Paul saw in it a "tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith; but now that faith is come we are no longer under a tutor."[3] To the Colossian church, he wrote saying that Christ had blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the Cross."[4]

Because it had serious limitations, the law was supplanted by love. While the law told men how to live, it was helpless to give them the power to attain. Surrounded as Paul knew the Roman Christians to be by the influence of the great Roman code which throughout many centuries had served as a foundation to the majority of the nations of Europe, Paul reminds the young church that "what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinances of law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."[5] Law is punitive and exacting, while love is forgiving and inspiring. Therefore, Moses, the law-giver is superseded by Christ, the love-giver.

---

[2] Matt. 5: 17.
[3] Gal. 3: 24.
[4] Col. 2: 14.
[5] Rom. 8: 3.

Likewise, Jesus had finished the work of the prophets by proving Himself to be the Messiah whose coming they had long anticipated. Far beyond the routine of the temple and the synagogue, the prophet had conceived of a social order in which justice would prevail, in which swords would be converted into plow-shares and where the weights and measures of the market-place would be exact and honest. The prophet was at once the most courageous and the most abused man in Israel. Many times did he suffer martyrdom, but his great hope lay in the coming of the Messiah, when it might be said, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the governments shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."[6] His dream had been fulfilled in Jesus.

Furthermore, Jesus had finished the work of John the Baptist, who had preceded Him by six months, preaching in the wilderness on the great text, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[7] It was John who, on the banks of Jordan, drew aside the curtain and introduced the Messiah in the words —"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." It was he who said—"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire."[8] As John faded out of the picture in which he for a time had held the foremost place, he said—"I must decrease and He must increase."

---

[6] Isa. 9: 6.

[7] Matt. 3: 2.

But why stop with little Palestine? Jesus had finished the work of every human being who had reached out his hand toward diety, from the most primitive man in the forests to the most advanced worshiper in Greece and Rome. To all mankind He is the revelation of "the unknown God."

Now this perfect life hurls tremendous challenges at the feet of His disciples who gather in the sanctuary. The first of these is to reproduce in ourselves His unselfish life. Like the chief priests who refused the silver from the hand of Judas flung upon the floor of the sanctuary, some of us have said, "What is that to us?" We have accepted the creed of the church even to its minutest interpretation of the atonement; we have complied with every condition of membership. Let the church, if it will, be divided into its two and a half hundred camps; we have found our particular camp and are members in good standing. Let others be concerned about world peace, social justice, racial harmony and all the rest of the long list of problems. As for us, our sins have been atoned.

---

[8] Matt. 3: 11.

To such Jesus would answer, "I came that ye might have life"; that the greatest challenge of the church is not dogmatism or even theology, but life; not theory but practice. Conduct wins more converts than creeds, whether at home or on the mission field. I once asked the chancellor of a great Mohammedan university in India about his notion of the race problem and of war. He was returning from an official visit to Europe, representing the Mohammedan wing of his government. To the first he replied, "Unless the white race changes its attitude toward the colored races I see no possible outcome except a clash of color." Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he continued, "But if we let the people of the white race go long enough, they will have killed each other off so rapidly that the outcome of a clash of color would be easily predicted." To the second question, he replied seriously, "It will take a long time for the East to regain the confidence it once had in the Christian West." There you have it. The world may not be able to fathom the mystery or the theology of the Cross, but it *can* understand the language of good-will and the parable of the Good Samaritan.

There is another challenge, namely, to finish the task of introducing Christ to others. His Apostles took Him seriously when, after the resurrection, He commanded them, "Go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations." The story of the book of The Acts is therefore as fascinating as fiction and as interesting as any book of history ever written. Paul's intellectual courage on Mars Hill, the brain center of the Mediterranean world, has never been surpassed. His moral courage in Rome, the home of the most powerful of all the peoples of his day, has never been excelled.

What audacity! for this unorganized cult to enter the stronghold of the Roman empire. Had Paul ventured to suggest to Cæsar that the religion he represented, founded by an obscure, crucified carpenter's son, would overcome the pagan ideals of his nation, the monarch would have brushed it aside as the statement of a fanatic. But the conquest went on, and by the year 250 A.D. fifty thousand Roman citizens—one-twentieth of the population of the Imperial City—had enlisted in the Christian army. Three hundred years after the death of John, the whole Roman Empire had been evangelized. When Constantine came to the throne as the first Christian emperor, 313 A.D., ten millions of his subjects were disciples of the Nazarene. In the year 435 A.D. Theodosius II ordered every heathen temple either destroyed or converted into a house of Christian worship. A century later, Justinian I closed the last heathen seminary, which for nine hundred years had stood in Athens as the center of heathen culture. Neo-Platonism and kindred movements had failed to stem the tide of Christianity, and finally in both East and West a religion of idols was displaced by the religion of the Cross. Almost simultaneous with the fall of political Rome, came the fall of pagan Rome in the West. "This spot of earth which had been for centuries the brain of the vast Roman empire, the focus of the power of the human race, and frequently the stage on which the most stupendous dramas in Rome's history were performed, with consuls, emperors and generals as the actors, and for the audience a dazzled world,"[9] sinks into ruins.

Today the Roman Forum is perhaps the most interesting spot in the world to the student of the early conflict of Christianity with Heathenism. Ruins, ruins, ruins everywhere—relics of a bygone power—the Golden Milestone, the center of the Roman world from which the distances to her colonies were measured, from Gaul in the West to Palestine in the East; the rostra where the voices of Cicero, Mark Antony and Cato frequently stirred the populace to the point of blind, patriotic frenzy as they inspired it to further conquest; the Palace of the Cæsars telling the story of a glory that was; ruins of pagan temples, the Porticus of the Twelve Gods, the Temples of Saturn, Venus and Roma; a scattered group of memorial arches, each bearing the name of the emperor in whose memory it was reared—Augustus, Severus, Titus. Near the junction of the Triumphal and Sacred Ways stands the Coliseum, "King of Ruins," once the scene of heathen heartlessness and unbridled brutality. What stories could these stones relate were they endowed with tongues—stories of lions fresh from the jungle loosed upon innocent Christians; the story of Ignatius with the blessings of Polycarp on his head saying, as he walked heroically to his doom, "I am as the grain of the field and must be ground by the teeth of lions, that I may become bread, fit for my Master's table"; the story of Telemachus coming from the East to lift his hand in protest against the unbridled passion which perpetuated the gladiatorial shows, only to become a martyr to his cause; the story of emperors sitting in their private boxes among eighty-five thousand of their subjects making merry to the tune of death. Hence Thayer exclaims,

---

[9] *Stoddard's Lectures*, VIII, p. 247.

"How odd that on a common hill
Beyond a rabble town,
That there a felon cross should spill
The Roman Empire down.

"How odd that He who pushed a plane
And smelled of wood and nails;
How odd that thumb did give the stain
Whereat Rome's purple pales.

"That He should cancel Roman hope
And build a lordlier crown,
That He with but a heart's bare scope
Should touch an empire down."

The list of spiritual warriors is a long and noble one. Besides the Apostles the New Testament records of conquest include such names as Philip, Apollos, Timothy, Trophimus, Titus, Priscilla, Aquilla, Lydia, Onesimus, Aristarchus and many others. The most amazing fact is the zeal and the power of that great army of men and women who traveled the humbler walks of life and whose names will ever be unknown. "Celsus scoffingly remarks," writes Schaff, "that fullers and workers in wool and leather, rustic and ignorant persons, were the most zealous propagators of Christianity, and brought it first to women and children. Women and slaves introduced it into the home circle. . . . Every Christian told to his neighbor, the laborer to his fellow laborer, the slave to his fellow slave, the servant to his master and mistress, the story of his conversion, as the mariner tells the story of his rescue from shipwreck."[10]

The later story is equally full of thrills and the list of warriors equally noble. Ulfilas planted the Cross among the Gothic Teutons in the fourth century. Augustine and Laurentius with forty monks were sent by Gregory the Great to the Britons in the year 596 A.D. Patrick is credited with introducing Christ to the people of Ireland in the fifth century and Columba to the Scotch a hundred years later. Boniface, also known as Winfrid, left England as a messenger to the Germans in the eighth century. In the ninth, the name of Ansgar became associated with the Scandinavians, Kodranson and Frederic with Iceland in the tenth. Shortly before this date, Methodius and Cyril went as missionaries from Greece to the Slavic peoples, the latter inventing an alphabet whereby the scriptures were translated into the old Slavonic language. During the years 980-1005 A.D. the court of Vladmir, emperor of Russia, was invaded by advocates of Christianity, Judaism and Mohammedanism, each bidding for his patronage. The investigation by emissaries of each of these religions on its own soil resulted in the adoption of Christianity, the emperor leading great hosts of his subjects with him into the church. By the dawning of the eleventh century practically all the nations of Europe had at least nominally accepted the Christian religion. From thence it migrated to the Western hemisphere, and we call America Christian.

---

[10] Schaff, *The History of the Christian Church*, II, 20, 21.

But our part of the task is not yet finished. It has scarcely begun. As long as half of the citizens of the so-called Christian nations are outside the church and so much of our very life is pagan, we scarcely merit the term by which we are known. Add to this the almost incomprehensible billion members of the human family who are still oblivious of the Cross and its beneficent message and we are driven to say with Elizabeth Cheney:

"Whenever there is silence around me
By day or by night—
I am startled by a cry.
It came down from the cross—
The first time I heard it.
I went out and searched—
And found a man in the throes of crucifixion,
And I said, 'I will take you down,'
And I tried to take the nails out of his feet.
But he said, 'let them be
For I cannot be taken down
Until every man, every woman and every child
Come together to take me down.'
And I said, 'But I cannot bear your cry.
What can I do?'
And he said, 'Go about the world—
Tell every one that you meet—
There is a man on the cross.' "[11]

---

[11] Stewart, *Anthology of the Cross*, p. 211.

The Seventh Word

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."
—Luke 23:46.

CHAPTER VIII

The Faith of the Ages Sealed

BUT a moment before, Jesus had cried dejectedly, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Now He speaks with calmest assurance, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." What a quick transition from a feeling of utter forsakenness to one of complete and conscious intimacy. Then He was on a lonely detour; now He is on the great highway of companionship with the Father.

For all of us there are many detours leading from the charted thoroughfare, any one of which, if not forsaken, will deliver us into a boundless morass of distress and disappointment. Like the character in that superb human drama, the Book of Ecclesiastes, men have often left the proven path for others, ranging all the way from the erroneous philosophy of fatalism to utter weariness with the world in which there seemed to be "nothing new under the sun." Happy is the man who never follows the broad way of sin. Every preacher and teacher should place a premium on the sanity and the wisdom of turning a deaf ear to the age-old invitation from the House of Seven Pillars by the highway of every youthful pilgrim, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled."[1] One of the glories of the gospel lies in the fact that to the man who *has* left the trail of spiritual plenty to feed on moral husks, it points the way back to the Father, assuring him that he may yet wear the robe of protection, the ring of spiritual royalty and may eat at the Father's table of mercy.

It is not at all impossible that our present day preaching may at times be so concerned about secondary motives of discipleship or may be so latitudinarian in scope as to misrepresent God as grossly, if not as offensively, as did Jonathan Edwards in that now antiquated sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." I am sure that the heart of the Father, as interpreted by Jesus, is far more tender toward the offender than the heart of man has been toward the morally unfortunate. Especially when a woman has made a mistake, society with its double standards, and sometimes even Christian society, has not made it easy for her to be re-instated. It is fortunate, indeed, that while men too frequently judge their fellows by the few fatal hours or years spent on the detour, God judges them by the general direction of their pilgrimage. He who finally concludes that "to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man," ought to be recognized by society and *must* be received into full fellowship of the church. As soon as he has gained the right to say Father, the church must receive him as a brother.

---

[1] Prov. 9: 5

In the use of the term Father, Jesus makes an original approach to deity. The Gentile conception was of a totally different being. His was a bargaining god who could be influenced by the art of the market jockey and by the sweet smell of burning incense. To the people of Jesus' own race, the term Father was not unknown, but it was never employed with any sense of filial intimacy. Its most common use was in the third person. To them God was a creator, full of wrath, far removed from the suppliant and bearing a name not to be spoken.

Jesus breaks down every barrier between man and God and makes of Him a daily companion. Here again, He introduces nothing to which He had not been accustomed in His whole career. With a single exception, He always addresses God as Father. This is the salutation in all His prayers, accentuating His intimacy in a single one by using the term as many as five different times.

It is with characteristic affection that He passes on to His disciples the privilege and the satisfaction of this same intimate fellowship. To Mary of Magdala, one of the first to appear at the tomb on the resurrection morning, He said, "Go to my brothers and say to them that I am going up to my Father and your

Father, to my God and your God."[2] For nineteen centuries now, great multitudes in every clime and under all kinds of circumstances have chanted in sweet tones and have spoken with childlike faith those intimate and filial words, "Our Father."

Jesus knew that His cause was not dying with Him, though His disciples thought differently. He feared the death of His program as little as He feared the death of His body. While He was yet a long way from Calvary had He not taught His disciples not to "fear those who kill the body and then have no more that they can do?" Now He demonstrates His philosophy of the conservation of the spiritual. Other prophets had been stoned long before He was crucified, but He felt the impact of their labors and came to fulfill their dreams. He knew that the Cross was only an incident in His career, a stepping-stone to greater heights, and that its evanescent defeat would be transformed into a permanent victory. "The poet was right," wrote Braune long ago, "the Cross is a plant which bears fruit without blossom. But the last words of Jesus may be regarded as the most glorious blossoms of the Cross, of the dry tree planted to bring forth fruit."[3] No, His physical death would not kill the truth; it never does. Rather, it glorifies it and sets it going at a more rapid pace in other lives. So it has ever been with martyrs to truth, from Stephen at Jerusalem to Polycarp at Smyrna, from Huss in Bohemia to the Boxer victims in China. So it is with that long line of pioneers in the field of science who make the supreme sacrifice to discover the secrets of the physical world for the benefit of mankind.

---

[2] John 20: 17.

[3] Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus*, p. 697.

Neither did Jesus introduce a new faith when He committed His spirit to deity. To our definite knowledge five thousand years before His words were spoken and ages before history recorded it, the older civilizations all about His little Palestine had been thinking in terms of immortality. The pyramids where the Pharaohs were buried until the Persians took to plundering their riches and the later Tombs of the Kings and Queens hewn in the stony cliffs farther up the Nile, still bear testimony to the same faith in a future life. One of the most interesting pieces of furniture so recently discovered in the Tomb of King Tutankhamen and deposited in the National Museum at Cairo is the cabinet containing tools used by the various workmen—the carpenter, the mason, the builder and the farmer. These were in perfect readiness to be appropriated by him according to the station in which his next reincarnation might place him. So it was among the Greeks and Romans across the Mediterranean to the west, and so it was among the civilizations of the Persians and Babylonians across the desert to the east from which Abram, His forefather, had come. Jesus introduced nothing new; He only re-affirmed an ancient faith.

In those last words which have been repeated by many believers throughout the centuries, Jesus "deposits His spirit as a jewel of inestimable value in the hands of God, with the hope to receive it again on the third day, and to reunite it with His glorified body."[4] But in spite of the fact that His Apostles had heard Him say that if this temple were destroyed He would raise it again in three days, neither they nor any of His disciples had caught its meaning. After His last breath, they seem to have been plunged so deep into the pit of despair as to have forgotten even those last tender rites which their love for Him would normally demand. It was left for Joseph, who had come from the village of Arimathea, seven miles away, to secure permission from the Roman government to take His body down for burial.

Three years of unreserved devotion to Jesus and His cause by eleven men now seems to have been hurled upon the rocks of defeat as recklessly as the missing twelfth Apostle had hurled himself to his death. Little is recorded of the group of Apostles during these three days, but their spirits must have been enshrouded in a darkness denser than those three abysmal hours when on the previous Friday they waited at the Cross. The mood of Cleopas, with whom the resurrected Jesus walked on the way to Emmaus, gives a glimpse of the mood of all His followers. Said he, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know what has happened there lately . . . about Jesus of Nazareth . . . how the high priests and our leading men gave him up to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified? But we had hoped that he was to be the deliverer of Israel. Why, beside all this, it is three days since it happened."[5] Their highest hopes had been borne to the grave and had been deposited with the lifeless body of their Teacher. But on that first Easter morning Jesus rose from the grave and brought with Him the dejected spirits of His followers. By His resurrection He converted a universal hope into reality and put the seal of experience on the faith of the ages; He restored the lost glow to the hearts of His Apostles and sent them out into the world as living witnesses to the fact that their Lord had risen from the dead, vindicating His teaching that the eternal qualities of the spirit cannot be defeated by death or holden by the grave.

---

[4] **Rambach quoted by Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus*, p. 695.**

Impulsive Peter, in whose soul the pendulum of defeat had swung to the farthest extreme, fifty days later, stands before a miscellaneous crowd and with his characteristic effusiveness accuses them of having crucified the Nazarene. Then with triumphant color in his voice he testifies that "God had set aside the pain of death and raised Him up, for death could not control Him."[6] Saul of Tarsus, galloping toward Damascus with credentials in his pocket from the highest authority in the nation, was bent upon dealing as deadly a blow to the whole cause as he had seen inflicted upon Stephen. But he is convinced of Jesus' messiahship, and instead of persecuting the disciples there, he remains to defend both them and their risen Lord. He appears before Agrippa at Cæsarea, saying, "I stand here to testify to high and low alike, without adding a thing to what Moses and the prophets declared would happen, if the Christ was to suffer, and by being the first to rise from the dead was to proclaim the light to our people and to the heathen."[7] Then, with the flame of a passion burning in his soul, he breaks through the boundary lines of his own race. Standing on Mars Hill in Athens, with the highest culture of his world gathered about him, he testifies to the resurrection of Jesus, thus flinging into the face of current philosophy and profound scholarship a seemingly impossible story. To the Corinthians he later gives that classic statement which has hung on lips without number, "Death has been triumphantly destroyed. Where, Death, is your victory? Where, Death, is your sting?"[8] Then comes John the disciple whom Jesus loved most, saying toward the close of that first century of the new era, "God's dwelling is with men, and he will live with them . . . there will be no death any longer, nor any grief or crying or pain. The old order has passed away."[9] By the end of the first century, the resurrection of Jesus had become one of the chief cornerstones in the Apostolic Church.

---

[5] Luke 24: 13-22 (Goodspeed Translation).

---

[6] Acts 2: 24.

[7] Acts 26: 22, 23.

But now, with nineteen hundred years of history between us and that historic event, with the influence of science, philosophy and materialism coursing through our veins, this faith of the Apostles in a personal immortality still is held with lively interest. Shortly after the war I noticed a shelf of new books on immortality in one of Philadelphia's leading book stores. That was characteristic of the book world during those years when the fathers, mothers and friends of ten millions of soldiers were trying to regain their bearings and solve the mystery of death. Following that, several of the leading dailies of two continents opened their columns to a discussion of the same theme. Among these were *The Westminster Gazette,* the *London Daily News,* the *New York Times* and the *New York World,* besides prominent magazines. Very recently, a volume has been published under the title, "We Believe in Immortality." It contains the testimony of one hundred prominent religionists—Protestants, Jews and Roman Catholics representing a wide range of vocations. Why so persistent a faith in the subject of the future life in this age when everything is tried in the laboratory of experience and when none can *prove* the doctrine of immortality to be true?

---

[8] **I Cor. 15: 54, 55.**

[9] **Rev. 21: 3, 4.**

Wholly apart from the religious argument, the very fact of personality demands continuity of life beyond the grave. The very moment one begins to discover for himself that there are higher and lower values with which he has to do, that there are values which are lifted wholly out of the sphere of the material, and are discernible only through some intangible power within himself, then he is face to face with that subtle something which we call personality. These values, of course, reached their highest peak in the personality of Jesus and it is inconceivable that so vital and so irresistible a life could be controlled by death.

Again, if one concedes that the God in whom he believes is an ethical God, he is driven to the question of the centuries, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" No one can read even superficially the history of the human race without being impressed by the fact that inequalities and injustices have always obtained. In every land, certain members of the commonwealth have suffered oppression politically, economically, socially and religiously. Within the memory of some who are yet alive in our own land, pictures of the colored slave still linger. Mr. R. R. Moton, Booker T. Washington's successor at Tuskegee Institute, asserts that one of the cogent reasons why his race has believed so devoutly in the future life is that its only hope of freedom from the system to which it was bound with chains of steel was in the future world. This is said to be the reason why the tonic chord in the thought of those stirring Negro Spirituals is the idea of heaven. It is to be doubted whether they can ever be fully appreciated by the Negro of today until he projects himself back beyond the hour of the Emancipation Proclamation. Likewise, no one can witness the pathetic sight of the thousands of low caste people of India as they work dejectedly at the prescribed menial tasks which no one else will perform, without feeling that among them also are many who ask, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" More than any other philosophy of life, this thought of ultimate justice and equality has been projected with immeasurable effect into the realm of sorrow, disappointment, persecution, disease and famine. One cannot escape the conviction that an ethical God demands a future life of readjustment.

While the theory of immortality cannot be proven by the process of the laboratory upon which the sciences base their conclusions, nevertheless, a liberal science is not only not hostile to this religious philosophy, but lends it much encouragement. For example, science has long taught that matter cannot be destroyed; that all we can do is to change its form. It has taught us that the coal we burn was once wood or some other element, that its present form is but one of the stages in its transition and that its burning does not destroy it but merely changes its form into heat, light, smoke, ashes, etc. From this law of conservation in the world of matter it would seem to be an easy step to the law of conservation in the higher world of the spirit. There is, therefore, nothing unscientific in Browning's contention that "There shall never be one lost good. What was shall live as before." If the botanist plants his brown dry bulb in the earth and anticipates a beautiful flower to spring from it; if the telegraph operator taps his keys and transmits intelligence a thousand miles away; if the English turn a radio dial in London and hear American voices and music in New York; and if before our eyes we see a debauched human being raised to a character with lofty ideals, then in the language of the Apostle to Agrippa, "why think it incredible that God should raise the dead?"

Again, many of the working laws in the field of the scientist are only hypotheses, but without them the riddle of the universe would be difficult of solution. Such is the theory of evolution which, in some form and with amazing rapidity, has come to be all but universally accepted. By the law of development which is seen all about us—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," it is inconceivable that the unfolding mind from childhood to maturity as conceived by the laws of psychology could be stifled at death without a serious miscarriage of nature. In a beautiful poem by Winfred Ernest Garrison, entitled *The Unfinished Symphony,* he asks:

> "Who knows that human heart and nerve—
> Life as we live it and death as we fear it—
> Are the topmost reach of the soaring curve
> That started in mire and climbed to spirit?
>
> "If hope and love grew out of the flesh,
> As flesh grew out of the steaming clod,
> Shall life not slip through the prisoning mesh
> To loftier levels still untrod?"

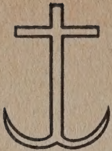
So this universal hope has clung to the race in the midst of its science, philosophy, materialism, naturalism and historical criticism. It has plucked the sting from death as truly as insulation has removed the fear of the electric current.

The world is still full of tombs, but the resurrection of Jesus has given them a new meaning. The aged Helena and "Chinese" Gordon have marked two different spots in Jerusalem where thousands of pilgrims have stood with reverence, but the place where Joseph laid the body of his Lord cannot be honored by a marble pile. All of that which was mortal of the Patriarchs and their wives rests under beautiful cenotaphs in the Mosque at Hebron; the mummies of the Pharaohs lie either in their tombs along the Nile or in the National Museum at Cairo; Saladin, victor over the Crusaders, and Fatima, the favorite daughter of Mohammed, lie in marble houses in Damascus. To the Far East the favorite wife of Shajahan rests in her superb white Taj Mahal in India; in China and Japan a long line of Ming rulers and Japanese emperors repose in their majestic mounds. But the tomb of Jesus is not, for "He has risen and become the first fruits of them that are asleep." The instrument of cruel death has become a symbol of eternal life and we still sing those immortal lines of Matheson,

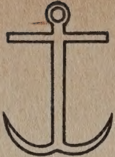
"O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

Part Two

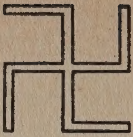
THE CROSS—SYMBOL AND A SPIRIT



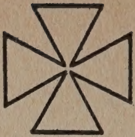
2



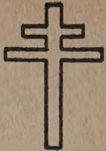
3



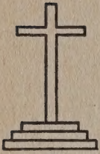
4



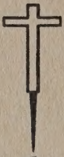
5



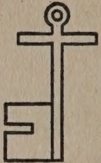
6



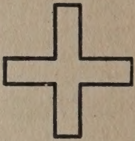
7



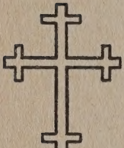
8



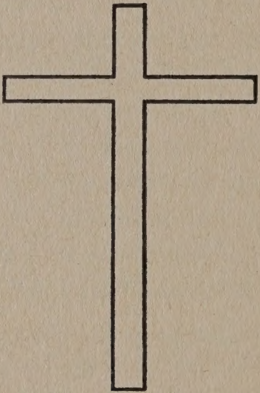
9



10

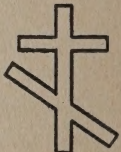


11

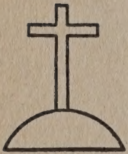


1

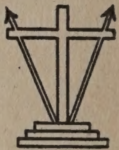
The Most Common Symbol of Christianity



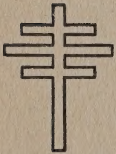
12



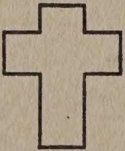
13



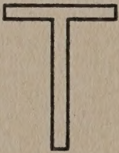
14



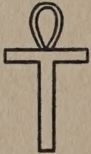
15



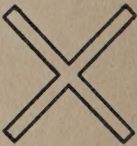
16



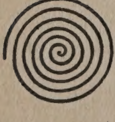
17



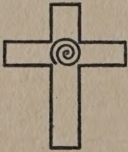
18



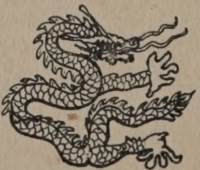
19



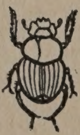
20



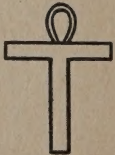
21



22



23



24

CHAPTER IX

Evolution and Abuse of the Symbol

THE Cross as a symbol of Christianity came into use rather tardily. It probably dates from the last half of the second century. This is largely accounted for by the fact that the Jewish Christians, in whose land the new religion was cradled, had inherited the influence of the Ten Commandments over a period of almost two thousand years. This code, of course, forbade even the semblance of idols. Every well-reared child could repeat the words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."[1] Added to this was their natural revulsion toward the numerous pagan symbols which were everywhere encountered on floors, walls, temples and public buildings. These mythological figures involved so much superstition and were fraught with such impossible religious import as to drive both the Gentile and Jewish Christians to extremes in their attitude toward even a legitimate use of symbolism in either worship or art. Furthermore, had they chosen to employ symbolism extensively it would have been an added source of irritation to the pagan powers and would have constituted an unnecessary mark for their enemies.[2]

---

[1] **Exod. 20: 3, 4.**

The same reasons account for the almost complete absence of Christian art in those early years. While the fixing of exact dates is scarcely possible, the catacombs, which are of first century origin, furnish the only fragments of the earliest attempt at the Christian use of iconography. Outlines of symbols are remarkably well preserved in these historic underground burial places.

Neither did the Cross predominate in the beginning. There were other figures, the most prominent being the fish. Its use was perhaps due to the fact that the correct spelling of the word "was made to yield the five initial letters of the Lord's descriptive name and was a secret symbol among believers." Then the lamb of sacrifice readily lent itself to the suggestion of the crucified Christ, while the shepherd portrayed the brotherly spirit which was so marked both in His parables and in His personal concern for His followers. The vine was not only a useful subject from the standpoint of art, but it was in keeping with Christ's metaphorical use of the term to describe the relation between Him and His disciples when He said, "I am the vine. Ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without Me ye can do nothing."[3] The fisherman, like the shepherd, illustrated the characteristic passion of Jesus for the spiritual welfare of men. In turn, it furnished a striking portrayal of the high calling to which all of His disciples are summoned, as indicated in His words to the Apostles, "Follow Me and I will make you to become fishers of men."[4] The Catacombs of St. Calixtus along the old Appian Way contain fairly well preserved fragments of some of these symbols and furnish a most fascinating study of the earliest attempts at Christian art.

---

[2] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II, 267.

The use of the Cross seems to have had a more gradual development than that of the other symbols, though it was destined to hold first place in the years ahead. For some reason, in its earliest appearance, it was so blended with other figures as to partly conceal its outline. Gradually it emerged from its association with all other symbols until it stood alone in bold relief. By the time of Chrysostom in the fourth century it had become universally established among believers. Said he, "We see it everywhere triumphant. We find it on houses, on roofs and walls, in cities and in hamlets, along the roads and in the deserts, on the mountains and in the valleys, on sea and on ships, on books and weapons, on garments, in marriage chambers, at banquets, on gold and silver vessels, in pearls, in paintings upon walls, on beds and on the bodies of very sick animals, on the bodies of the possessed, at the dances of the merry and in the brotherhoods of the ascetics."[5]

---

[3] John 15: 5.
[4] Mark 1: 17.
[4] Zenos, *Compendium of Church History*, p. 67.

Making the sign of the Cross by touching the breast and the head, which had a second century beginning, came to be employed not only during acts of formal worship, but also in connection with many of the daily performances of life, such as rising in the morning and taking the regular bath, and was a suggestive close for the prayer of thanksgiving at meal time. It undoubtedly had its origin in a sincere desire to remind the believer of his relation to the Christ of Calvary, not only at the time of administering the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper and during other acts of worship, but also during the routine duties of the work-a-day world.

The alleged discovery of the Cross by the aged Helena gave rise to two church festivals—The Feast of the Invention of the Cross, which has been regularly observed on the third day of May by the Latin Church since the fifth century, and The Feast of the Elevation of the Cross, which has been celebrated on

---

[5] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, III, p. 561.

September the fourteenth by both the Eastern and Western Churches for many centuries. It was not long until the ground plan for places of worship took the form of the symbol. This custom has covered a wide area and is confined to no single branch of the church. The nave and the choir, representing the upright portion of the Cross, and the two transepts the horizontal section, are characteristic of many beautiful cathedrals as well as of structures with less architectural merit.

Like many superficial and mechanical devices, the Cross developed a superstitious aspect in its later employment which robbed it of much of the virtue it may have had for those who introduced it as an aid to personal devotion. Its wide use may be easily visioned by noting the statement of Tertullian of the third century. Said he, "At every step, at every movement, at every coming in and going out, in putting on our clothes and our shoes, in the bath, at table, in the evening, lying down or sitting, whatever attitude we assume, we mark our foreheads with a little sign of the Cross."[6]

It was after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, during the first quarter of the fourth century, that the use of the symbol spread with great acceleration. All the insignia of the Empire were replaced by the new symbol. Helena shared the enthusiasm of her illustrious son's new faith and at the age of eighty years added much to the reverence for the new emblem by her pilgrimage to Jerusalem in search of the very tree upon which the Christ was crucified. The three main portions of what she accepted as the historic wood which bore the Master's body were presented—one to the Bishop of Jerusalem, one to the Bishop of Constantinople and the third to the Bishop of Rome. From the portions nearest the nails, upon which she believed the blood of Christ must have dropped, the aged queen created a miniature Cross, placed it in a box of pure gold set in precious stones, and presented it to her emperor son. With the same credulity which characterized Constantine's acceptance and use of it, it was received by succeeding emperors.

---

[6] **Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*; Article, Cross.**

Following Constantine's practice of wearing the emblem on his person, many believers adorned themselves with it in an extravagant fashion. Crosses of gold and silver were set with the most expensive jewels and came to be in great demand. This naturally introduced the commercial element into religion, and barter in these originally sacred articles, became a matter of serious concern to the church. While their pagan neighbors were now impotent to interfere with the customs of the Christians, the use of the sign on their heads, eyes, mouths and breasts, together with the extravagant employment of the symbol itself, so attracted their attention that they sneeringly branded the believers as *Cross Worshippers*. It was a short step from this extreme to real idolatry. Fraud in the traffic became general. Such noble souls as Gregory the Great expressed themselves as sincerely regretting the lengths to which symbolism and fraud had gone. Later, the church placed a ban on the traffic.

All this protest seemed to be of little avail. The weaknesses and the evils of over-emphasizing the symbol, and the superstition which grew out of the alleged discovery of the real Cross of Christ, had gotten beyond control. Sections of the original were reputed to be in the possession of the Cistercian Abbey of the Holy Cross in the vicinity of Thurles, Ireland. Another section was claimed to be in the possession of the Cathedral of Seville in Spain and soon many others laid similar claim. When the physical impossibility of so generous a distribution was suggested by the more rational, it was contended that the true Cross had within itself the power of reproduction, that, like the loaves with which Christ fed the multitudes, it multiplied in the breaking.

It also came to be believed that all crosses possessed miraculous power. Christians practiced carrying the symbol on their persons, believing that it insured a successful career. In times of plague, beasts belonging to the Christians were branded with the form of the Cross in order that they might be made immune from its ravages. It was further believed to possess power to give the wearer victory over his enemies. An ancient Cross found in an old Roman tomb contained this inscription—"*crux est vita, mihi, mors, inimice, tibi*"—(The Cross is life to me, death, O enemy, to thee). Thus, the custom grew among the masses. Neither was Constantine alone among the great who felt a sense of protection and the assurance of success by virtue of its presence. Its magic charm likewise brought cheer to Charlemagne, to Napoleon, to Alfred the Great and to others.

The crucifix, which finds a place of prominence in every Roman Catholic cathedral and chapel, and which greets the eyes of patients in Catholic hospitals, originated late in the seventh century. Prior to this the figure of a lamb was placed on the Cross, then the bust of Christ and later the whole form of the body. The value of the crucifix was variously estimated. The sentiment of the church was divided. In 692 A.D. church authorities directed that the whole figure of the Saviour be placed on the Cross. In 726 A.D. the Eastern Orthodox Church completely prohibited the use of the crucifix and all other plastic images.

The veneration of relics and the worship of saints which arose to prominence simultaneously during the fourth century kept even pace for many succeeding generations. "The worship of relics," says Schaff, "like the worship of Mary and the saints, began in a sound religious feeling of reverence, of love and gratitude, but has swollen to an avalanche, and rushed into all kinds of superstitious and idolatrous excesses."[7]

The Reformation rescued the Cross from superstition and caused the protestors to turn away from the veneration of relics and from the worship of saints. In the process it reduced symbolism almost to the place it had held prior to 150 A.D. While Luther's wedding ring had the symbol engraved upon it, he spoke openly against the abuse of it, contending that a dead object had no virtue to impart to a living soul.

Practically all but the Anglican branch of Protestantism makes limited use of the figure today. Occasionally, a Protestant church may have a Cross on some portion of the exterior structure, but it is so far from general that to the average passer-by it usually connotes either Anglicanism or Romanism. Much more than in former years, however, architects are introducing into modern church edifices the nave and the transept. Protestantism has not hesitated to use bread and wine to symbolize the body and blood of Christ, but it has frequently and inconsistently tabooed the likeness of the instrument on which He was crucified. In this extreme attitude toward the use of symbols in religious culture Protestantism has, without question, lost one of the legitimate aids to devotion. As the Roman section of the church has erred in the extremes to which it has gone in the direction of its employment, so Protestantism has lost in the extreme to which it has gone in its exclusion.

---

[7] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, III, p. 450.

After all, there is a common belief in the central place which Calvary holds in redemption. Whatever may be the difference in the technical interpretation of the atonement or in church polity, the fact is that the sight of the Cross on a house of worship in a non-Christian land elicits from one a far greater sympathy than does any non-Christian symbol. That there are so many more of the world's population either wholly pagan or wholly outside any kind of religious influence whatever and that there are among us in the United States such organizations as "The Association for the Advancement of Atheism in America" should stimulate in all believers in Christ a desire for closer co-operation instead of antipathy and open antagonism. In every sphere of moral and social betterment and in the thousand things wherein Christians are in complete agreement there is every reason why they should together strive toward a better community and a better world. The pathos of our un-Christian hatreds is accentuated as one notes the striking superiority of any branch of the Church universal over the non-Christian religions. Despite the wide difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, one feels a spiritual kinship to a Roman Catholic priest who wears the symbol of Christianity that he is unable to feel toward the half nude and besmeared holy men in the Orient, or toward the Buddhist and Lama priests who still lead their people to gods made with hands. The fact is, no group of Christians has a monopoly on the symbol of our holy religion. To the contrary, there is a sense of fraternity among all who seek honestly to possess the spirit it represents. Herein lies a common bond concerning which every generous disciple should be able to say with Frances Avery Faunce—

"O, I was born a Protestant
And all my years have clung
To the lifted, living Cross
Where the Lord Christ hung.

"Now the goodly Catholics nearby
Have had the grace to raise
A steeple with a golden Cross;
Take, Lord, my praise!

"For, O, it is a noble thing
To see my symbol high
Upon a brother's house of prayer,
Against the changing sky."

The symbol, however, is not the most important item in the Christian program. The spirit is fundamental. Had the symbol been wholly excluded, the spread of Christian ideals would by no means have been defeated. We must not forget that it is possible for the Christian to employ all the forms and symbols at his disposal and still miss completely the joy of a vital Christianity. Paul guarded his converts against this very thing when he charged that some possessed the "form" but lacked the "power" of religion. Before symbolism ever came into extensive use among believers, they had come to be a revolutionary force in the Roman Empire. If, as has been frequently asserted, the church made a more vital contribution to the world during the first three hundred years of its history than it did during the next ten or twelve centuries, then certainly symbolism with all its virtues cannot be considered too fundamental in its program of world conquest.

CHAPTER X

A Panorama of the Cross in Art and Architecture

THE *Shadow of the Cross* by Henri Ault is an impressive picture. I once saw it by chance in a private exhibit in London. So far as I know, it is not classed among the great paintings and my journal makes mere mention of it. But, regardless of its lack of universal reputation, I have carried in my mental gallery ever since the stalwart figure of the Christ on whose shoulders the form of the Cross would gradually appear. The lecturer explained that its mysterious appearing, which had gained for it also the name *Mystery Painting,* was due to the intensity of light thrown on the color pigments, producing the symbol in complete outline.

One studies the life of Christ with the same results. His matchless character is portrayed on every page of the gospels and epistles of the New Testament scriptures. But the more light the student throws upon His character the more distinctly he sees the heroic and unselfish principles which inevitably drove Him to drink the cup of death.

It is not strange, therefore, that this fact has captured the interest and stirred the imagination of many of the world's greatest artists. His whole ministry, and especially the events following His triumphal entry, have claimed the genius of a long line of painters and sculptors. Beginning with the scene in the upper room, Da Vinci, Fra Angelico, Andrea del Sarto and others have made real the prophetic incident, interpreting the supremacy of love over hate as perpetuated in the Lord's Supper. Hoffman makes it impossible for us to escape the struggle in the Garden and those words of resignation, "nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done." Greiger's brush catches Judas in the act of printing the kiss of betrayal on the cheek of his rejected Master, while Hoffman's *Christ Taken Captive* makes the noise of swords and staves echo in our ears. As He stands in Pilate's hall and the Roman judge asks, "What evil hath He done?" it is Munkácsy who helps us to hear the mob cry, "Crucify Him." Doré paints the haunting dream of Pilate's wife and follows Christ down the steps of the Praetorium where the Cross awaits Him below. Here Raphael places it upon His back. We see Him bearing it to Golgotha where John Styka, sparing us the gruesomeness of the scene, leaves it lying beside the waiting Christ till Rubens elevates it. Munkácsy holds it erect, with its victim between two thieves, to the end of those few tragic hours when the earth quaked, the sun hid its face in shame and He cried, "It is finished." Rubens pictures Nicodemus taking the lifeless form from the tree, and Hoffman interprets the devotion of the women who wrapped the body in linen clothes and spices, in keeping with the burial customs among the Jews. Three days of silence and consequent discouragement among His followers, then, on the first day of the week the women came to the tomb with spices. It is Plockhorst who brings to us the reality of the statement, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen."[1] The same artist again picks up the story and through his imagination we watch the risen Lord walking with two bewildered disciples on their way to Emmaus, discussing the greatest topic of the day, namely, "the things concerning the Nazarene, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him." "As they sat at meat, their eyes were opened and they knew Him."[2] Life has triumphed over death and the victorious Cross begins its long journey down the centuries.

As a symbol of the love and sacrifice exemplified by Jesus, the Cross has held likewise a dominant place in Christian architecture. It has been the writer's privilege to minister to two congregations, each of whose building is erected in cruciform and on whose highest pinnacle stands the symbol. Among the more than half hundred crosses used in the designs of the Gothic edifice in Springfield, Illinois, built after Melrose Abbey, are two significant ones brought from the Holy Land and set in black Belgian marble. The material for one of these was brought by the writer from Solomon's quarries. The other from the Garden of Gethsemane was the gift of a former minister. The following extract from the dedicatory leaflet suggests the church's interpretation of the symbol:

---

[1] Luke 24: 5, 6.
[2] Luke 24: 13-31.

THE MINISTER—"Today we come to dedicate these two historic Crosses, each with its own peculiar significance. The white Cross on the north pilaster represents the altar in the Temple where for a thousand years Judaism made its sacrifices to Jehovah. The brown Cross on the south pilaster represents the loving heart of God as expressed by Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary. Thus these twin symbols bind together the Old and New Testaments in a mystic union as a constant reminder to us that the love of the Father, while always in evidence, reached its greatest expression in Jesus Christ, our Lord. They are given with the hope that those who celebrate the Lord's Supper and those who present themselves for Christian baptism under their shadow may be led to personify in their lives the high moral and spiritual principles which the symbol reflects."[3]

---

[3] c. f. Heb. 9: 19; 10: 14.

THE CONGREGATION—"We, the people of this congregation, do now receive with becoming reverence these symbols of our holy religion. We do hereby pledge ourselves anew to strive to the uttermost to attune our lives more perfectly to the life of Him who transformed this symbol from one of shame into one of power; we pledge ourselves to strive to make the spirit of the Cross the spirit of the whole congregation and to lend our influence in planting it in the uttermost parts of the earth. So help us God, Amen."

The prominence of the Cross in the architecture of Christian Europe is well known to thousands of travelers whose itinerary usually includes a visit to such great cathedrals as Rheims, Cologne, Milan, Notre Dame, St. Sulpice, St. Paul's, Westminster, St. Peter's and others. No further mention will therefore be made of them. The Catacombs of St. Calixtus which contain remnants of it are perhaps less familiar. Frescoed on marble one finds two forms of the symbol with the anchor (2 and 3). Here the swastika (4) was also employed very early in the development of Christian art. Mackenzie calls attention to a Cross at Carnac in Brittany which he intimates "may be a relic of the mountain and river worship during early Christian times, when, as there is evidence to show, many people were only half converted." Crude Christian Crosses, for instance, are to be seen incised in some Scottish caves, but they are not, of course, the oldest Cross symbols that have survived; nor do they really of themselves afford any indication as to where the Cross had origin.[4] On the old Byzantine Church in Athens, bearing the inscription "418 A.D.," one notes the Cross with the anchor similar to that seen in the catacombs. On another of the Greek Orthodox edifices, which the stately and hospitable priest said dated back to the year 500 A.D. are to be seen carved in stone as part of the exterior decorations the Maltese Cross (5); the Latin Cross (1); and in lighter lines, the Double Cross (6); the Anchor Cross (2); the Cross with the Steps (7). That the Greek Church has perpetuated the use of the symbol is strikingly indicated by the fact that it was profusely used in the spacious and highly ornate edifice constructed in Athens in 1821 out of material gathered from seventy old Greek houses of worship.

In Egypt, where Christianity was probably introduced as early as the middle of the first century, there are no imposing church edifices either ancient or modern. The Coptic Christians, descendants of the Pharaohs, are a simple folk who worship in modest buildings. That the Cross was used in the early centuries is highly probable from the fact that in the National Museum in Cairo, one finds a small metal Cross in the Latin form (8), reputed to have been used on the staffs of the early missionaries. Here, too, is a wooden block bearing on one side an angel with the Cross and on the obverse a man with a book and a Cross. A large door-shaped marble is the container for a small chalice used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper; and a huge key with a Cross (9) is listed as belonging to a chapel door of the fifth century.

---

[4] Donald A. Mackenzie, *The Migration of Symbols*, pp. 70, 182.

Coming to Palestine, one finds the symbol used more conservatively. The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, said to be the oldest church edifice in Christendom, dating from 335 A.D., affords a good example. This historic structure has Crosses deeply carved upon its wooden doors. On one door is the Greek (10), on the other the Latin figure with five in one (11). Woven into the piece of oriental tapestry, hanging at the entrance to the traditional spot where the manger stood, is the Cross of Agony, otherwise called the Ruthenian Cross (12). One explanation of this symbol is that the lower beam was moved out of parallel by the writhing body of Christ. But the Russian Christians see in the lower beam which points to the earth a symbol of the old creedal statement, "He descended into hell."

One sees at least three forms of the symbol in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which towers above the cave wherein Helena, whose pilgrimage three hundred years after Calvary is familiar to most readers, believed she had found the original Crosses of Christ and the two thieves. There are a Greek Cross (10); another mounted on a circular support (13); and in the chapel used by the Latins, a Cross on steps with a spear leaning against each of the arms (14). The latter is one of the rarest. In Jerusalem, also on what I understand to be an old Coptic Church, one finds a triple Cross (15).

The Armenians seem not to have employed the symbol as profusely as some other early groups. In the Church of St. James, which takes its name from James the martyr Apostle and the patron saint of the Armenians, is the heavier form of the Latin Cross (1).

At Sychar, a later Greek structure covers the ruins of an old Crusaders' church built around the historic Jacob's Well where Jesus sat and preached a most searching sermon to a Samaritan woman. In the gable window of the Greek portion is a huge stone Cross, perhaps six feet high (16). Among the chapel decorations are a painting of the Lord's Supper and an altar cloth with the Cross of Agony as its central design.

In Damascus, the city of Paul's conversion, Mohammedan mosques predominate over Christian edifices. The largest of these would contain two or three of our average modern church buildings. The one which contains the chapel with the tomb over the traditional burial place of the head of John the Baptist is 125 feet wide by 130 feet in length. Christians who once worshipped in one of its chapels have left few traces of that fact. The Church of St. Moses contains a suggestive painting of the Lord's Supper, differing from all others with which the writer is familiar. Christ, the central figure, is represented as standing, the Apostles as sitting, while resting on the floor are the bowl and towel, suggestive of the humble service He will soon perform in washing the Apostles' feet.

Of the almost four hundred kinds of Crosses which have been used before and after Christ in the fields of heraldry, decorative art and religion, the following nine are generally conceded to hold a place of primacy:

The Greek Cross (10) ; the Latin Cross (1) ; the Tau Cross (17) ; the Crux Ansata or Handled Cross (18) ; the Cross of St. Andrew (19) ; the Swastika according to the Sanskrit or, following the French, the Gammatte Cross (4) ; the Maltese Cross (5) ; the Double or Lorraine Cross (6) ; and the Cross with Steps (7).

CHAPTER XI

The Pre-Christian Cross in Symbolism

TO those who for the first time enter upon a study of the Cross as a symbol, it is surprising to find how almost universally it was used many centuries before it bore the body of our Lord. In a volume which represents a lifetime of research, William Wood Seymour has traced it among the pre-Christian peoples of both hemispheres.[1]

It was found on the jewels which bespangled our foremothers and on the oldest pottery and coins of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Babylonians and Persians. The Druid cemeteries in northern England, the funeral urns of the early Etruscans in northern Italy and graves of the Romans farther south have all yielded traces of its former use in connection with the dead. When a criminal was condemned to die in Greece, the initial letter of the word death was placed before his name on the judicial tablets, but when acquitted, the Tau as a symbol of life was used instead. Especially in Egypt, it is seen in connection with the custom of tattooing, the interpretation being that sight of it would be pleasing to the gods as they viewed the deceased.

---

[1] *The Cross in History, Tradition and Art.*

Among the Assyrians and Chaldeans to the east, it was employed as a symbol of the sky and of Anu, god of the sky. Tiglath Pileser, the king who in Old Testament history is recorded as having defeated Pekah, king of Israel, has been represented carrying it as a symbol of conquering power. India, China, Tibet and Japan were all accustomed to it in the form of the swastika. Its discovery in both North and South America by the earliest explorers occasions surprise that here it was of pre-Columbian origin. The groundwork remains of the Mound Builders in Ohio were sometimes in cruciform, while traces of the Cross still exist among the Aztec Indians in Mexico and also among the early inhabitants of Central America, Peru and Paraguay.

Not even a casual treatment of the pre-Christian Cross would be justified without a suggestion that there are two interpretations of its meaning. One is that it had no connection whatever with the Christian symbol and the other that it anticipated it by way of type or prophecy. The latter interpretation carries the idea far beyond the actual figure itself. It finds in nature also an anticipation of the Christian Cross in rocks, in trees, in flowers and in the outstretched wings of the bird. Those who hold this view would say with Felicia Hemans:

"Many a sign
Of the great sacrifice which won us heaven,
The woodman and the mountaineer can trace
On rock, on herb, and flower."

Furthermore, they look upon the wood in Noah's Ark, the wood borne by young Isaac to Moriah, the branch with which Moses smote the bitter waters of Marah, the staff used by the Prophet Elisha to raise the son of the Shunamite woman, Aaron's rod that budded, the cluster of grapes brought by the twelve spies from the Promised Land, David's staff and many other instruments, especially in Old Testament history, as "types" of the Cross of Christ. Among the early church Fathers who inclined to this interpretation were Gregory the Great, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyril and Chrysostom. It is well that neither great good nor harm can come from these age-long speculations.

The other interpretation is that these semblances of the Cross were the results of the natural development of symbolism whether used as art motifs or as the expressions of some religious belief. While those who hold to this view would repudiate any religious connection between the pre-Christian crosses and the accepted symbol of Christianity, they would hold tenaciously, nevertheless, to the ever-present love of God toward His children, and say with Horace Bushnell, "It is as if there were a Cross unseen, standing on its undiscovered hill far back in the ages out of which was sounding always just the same deep voice of suffering, love and patience heard by mortal ears from the sacred hill of Calvary."

Some of the early symbols were ethnic, while others were scattered throughout many nations. Count Goblet D'Alviella asserts that "the ancient world might be divided into two zones, characterized, one by the presence of the gammadion, the other by that of the winged globe as well as of the crux ansata; and these two provinces barely penetrate one another at a few points of the frontier, in Cyprus, at Rhodes in Asia Minor and in Lybia. The former belongs to Greek civilization and the latter to Egypto-Babylonian culture."[2]

As to the origin of like symbols among different nations there are also two theories. One school explains it by the theory of *psychic unity* in the races and the other by the theory of *migration*. For example, the latter traces the swastika from the Greeks to the Indians with such connecting links as that afforded by the eastern expedition of Alexander the Great. From India it was carried by Buddhist missionaries to China, Japan and Tibet. That it became a prominent figure among Buddhists is seen in its outlines on the Buddha Footprints and in the Chinese Buddha with the design on his breast.[3]

---

[2] Donald A. Mackenzie, *Migration of Symbols*, p. 11.
[3] See cuts in Donald A. Mackenzie, *Migration of Symbols*, pp. 7 and 34.

A probable modern example of the migration theory is found in the striking similarity between the forms of worship in the religion of Tibet and those practiced by the Roman Catholics. For instance, in the Lama Temple in Peking, where the Tibetans have established a strong center, one hears the antiphonal singing led by a Tibetan priest in his brown robes with the acolytes chanting the responses. The writer asked a Roman Catholic priest who had spent some years as a missionary in China how he explained this similarity. He insisted that it was due to the effect of the Nestorian Movement in the sixth and seventh centuries. Robinson is of the opinion that much of this is traceable to the Franciscan efforts in Tibet in the fourteenth century.[4]

The distribution of the Christian Cross, however, may be said to enlist both theories. That the fact of the crucifixion occupied the minds of early believers in all lands, is not debatable; and that through the process of migration the symbol became universally used is likewise a matter of history. However, its first employment is not so easily determined. That it was not in Palestine, and that it came into use among the early European Christians, is the accepted verdict of research.

As a means of torture and death, the Cross was used long before Christ was crucified. Cyrus chose it as a means of putting to death the Queen of Scythia in the sixth century before Christ. Polycrates, the King of Samos, was crucified. By this method Alexander the Great killed two hundred Tyrians, and Alexander Jannaeus feasted his eyes upon the bodies of eight hundred offending Jews as they hung upon this instrument of torture. Perdiccas crucified the King of Cappadocia; Xerxes thus exposed the dead body of Leonidas to accentuate his hatred for him. To express the lowest form of dishonor by exposing the dead bodies of offenders on this form of instrument was a common custom.

---

[4] Robinson, *History of Missions*, p. 216.

As to whether these earliest forms of the Cross were employed as symbols or whether they were merely art motifs, the simplest position in which two straight lines could be placed, scholars are of divided opinion. Some contend that even from the standpoint of decoration it is difficult to dissociate them from religion. Mackenzie insists that "it cannot be overlooked, that all the great ancient arts were rooted in religious and magico-religious beliefs. The art movements of ancient Egypt and ancient Babylon, were inspired and promoted by the priests and cannot be understood without reference to the religious systems of those pioneer civilizations. Even battle scenes had their religious bearing, for victory was given by the gods."[5]

---

[5] Donald A. Mackenzie, *Migration of Symbols*, p. x.

It is thought that the oldest symbol is the spiral (20), prevalent among the ancients of the Mediterranean area, in some parts of Europe and in the Far East. Apart from the art motif it was directly connected with whirlwinds, whirlpools and with the "Great Bear" (Ursa Major) constellation which indicated the seasons of the year. It can easily be seen how it would thus connect itself with the gods who controlled the elements, the seasons and the cardinal points. It is also interesting to note in this connection, that an early Scotch Cross contains the spiral (21), indicating the tenacious notions of the ancients and the manner in which these cruder conceptions were carried along by the early Christians.[6]

The most common Chinese symbol to us of the West is that of the dragon (22). Chinese architecture abounds in the employment of it. Even the tiling on the famous Temple of Heaven bears it. Among its many offices were to be present at the birth of great men, to control the east wind, and to serve as carriers of the gods.

Ancient Egypt abounded in symbols among which were those for the double kingdom, the lotus flower representing upper and the papyrus lower Egypt. Among the distinctly religious figures were the scarab (23), symbol of immortality, and the key of life (24) whose influence was thought to extend over two worlds. The scarab was placed in the body of the deceased after the vitals had been removed and the wound covered with a brass plate. The mummy of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, exhibited in the National Museum at Cairo, still contains this brass instrument. The key of life appears everywhere on the ruins of the Temples of Luxor and Karnak, sometimes in the hands of the king and again, as a wreath composed of small keys of life, thrown about his neck to guide him in administering the affairs of state. It is most fortunate that, under the direction of Professor Breasted, all the symbolism and ideographs on the Tombs of the Kings and Queens are being preserved. Out of these, no doubt, great riches will be added to the fascinating and important study of Egyptology and its relation to the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean area.

---

[6] cf. op. cit., pp. 70, 71.

The swastika so universally used among the ancients and still a familiar figure in art, is also directly traceable to a religious or magico-religious usage. One of its original meanings, "good luck," has been carried down through the centuries. The son of an Iroquois chief in Canada was asked by the writer why his people used the swastika and what had been its age-long interpretation. He replied that it had always been looked upon as a symbol of good luck. Its modern equivalent in the white population of America would be the horseshoe. Travelers in the

Orient today are quite accustomed to seeing a string of highly colored beads around the necks of the horses that transport them from place to place in their quest for an understanding of the civilization of these interesting peoples. The writer remembers also finding one of these charm-strings hanging over the radiator top of an automobile, placed there by its Mohammedan driver as a protection against accidents.

The swastika is perhaps the best known of all the early symbols and in recent times has attracted the attention of students of symbolism on both hemispheres. That it had a distinctly religious significance before the beginning of the Christian era in the Old World and during its pre-Columbian usage in both North and South America, is unquestioned. Says Mackenzie, "The swastika, which was associated with the spiral in many areas, appears, as is shown, to have been introduced sometime after the discovery of agriculture and the fixing of the cardinal points. Its development from the equal-limbed cross of the early mariners, including those who settled in Crete, apparently took place when it was observed that the revolving 'Great Bear' constellation indicated the seasons, pointing with its tail eastward in spring, southward in summer, westward in autumn and northward in winter."[7] As in the case of other pre-Christian symbols, the swastika soon found a place in Christian art even more generous than the spiral. It was employed in the catacombs at Rome, in the Irish manuscripts dealing with Christianity and on the sculptured stones of Scotland.

---

[7] op. cit. XIII.

CHAPTER XII

Theological Aspects of the Cross

IT is truthfully asserted that more has been written about the story of the Cross than about any other one subject within the compass of the human mind. It is likewise true that the anthology of the Cross contains as much dogmatic theology as any other subject in the Christian religion. What church father did not leave to posterity his interpretation of the atonement, even though it declared war against all other interpretations and often precipitated a prolonged verbal combat? The hymnology of the church has been built around this theme from the time when the early Christians must have sung in subdued tones in private homes and in catacombs, to the day when in humble chapel, in temple, in stately cathedral and in the great out-of-doors we sing without any thought of persecution. Both within and without the church, the pen of the poet has been quickened and the anthology of the Cross has grown with each generation. Away back in the sixth century Venantius Fortunatus sang:

"O Cross, our one reliance, hail!
This Holy Passiontide, avail

To give fresh merit to the faint,
And pardon to the penitent."[1]

Winifred A. Cook of our own century sang encouragement to each soul of that great army of wounded heroes who barely missed "going west" to sleep under a little cross among the poppies in Flanders:

"Thou hast met life at death-grips; and hast lain
Crushed, but not beaten;—with patient breath
Breathed inarticulate prayers among the slain,
Half slain thyself,—waiting a worse than death
With desperate courage; and emerged at length
The shadow of thyself, o'ershadowed by
A higher Self than thou, even His who saith,
'A greater love can no man know than this'—
Who graves thee with the selfsame wounds as His,
Setting as sacred seal thereon—His Kiss."

The literature of the fourteen intervening centuries of history is enriched and illumined with gems of thought from the spirit of Calvary more varied than the jewels which studded the ancient crowns of kings. It is not strange, therefore, to hear it affirmed that " to such a theme the illuminated poets of every generation have given their best and highest efforts. At times, the blinding light has obscured their vision, at other times they have seen only a fragment and have set that down. But running through all great literature there has been the sequence of sin, retribution and reconciliation. Sophocles, Euripides and Thucydides spoke of nothing else; it stalks through every page of Dante. Shakespeare employs the sequence in all major tragedies; George Eliot dealt with it in *Adam Bede* and the *Mill on the Floss;* it is the central idea of *David Copperfield* and *The Scarlet Letter,* and has marked the pages of all elevated and distinguished poetry."[2] In all this the story of the Cross is the climax as well as the interpretation.

---

[1] Stewart, *Anthology of the Cross*, p. 39.

In the anthology of the Cross one finds every conceivable dogma of the atonement in the ecclesiastical calendar. After the Reformation Buonarroti (1586-1646) sings of original sin removed. Words from the pen of anonymous writers of the same period are typical of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. Frederick W. Faber (1814-1863) stresses the oft-found moral influence idea of love's expression. Typical of the wholly untheological approach, but portraying rather the pragmatic effect on the individual who struggles with the hard tasks of life, are the words of Joyce Kilmer, one of the soldiers in the late war who paid the supreme sacrifice:

"My shoulders ache beneath my pack
(Lie easier Cross, upon my back)

"I march with feet that burn and smart
(Tread, Holy Feet, upon my heart)

---

[2] op. cit. XIX.

"Men shout at me who may not speak
(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy cheek)

"I may not lift a hand to clear
My eyes of salty drops that sear.

"(Then shall my fickle soul forget
Thy Agony of Bloody Sweat?)

"My rifle hand is still and numb
(From Thy pierced palm red rivers come)

"Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land and sea.

"So let me render back again
This millionth of Thy gift. Amen."

In the more recent literature on the subject, one finds, speaking in the large, three angles of approach—the historical, the dogmatic and the experiential or pragmatic. After seeing the altar within the temple confines, among the ruins of Pompeii, typical of the pagan custom of sacrifice in the centuries before Christ; after looking upon the Kalighat scene in Calcutta, typical of the same custom today; and remembering how large a place the altar held in the Jewish Temple, one comes with deep appreciation to such an historical approach as churchmen like Dr. Glover have made. In the following words he gives his readers the right to their own interpretation—"The writer is to be the historian merely; it is for the reader to pass upon the evidence submitted and to be his own theologian." This is the attitude of mind in which men like Alexander Campbell found great pleasure. It was his plan to read his Bible as though he had never read it before and as though no man had ever read it before him. This is the open mind.

A better example of the dogmatic approach could scarcely be found than that expressed by Mrs. E. Herman:

> "Meditation on doctrine is inevitably difficult, and even dry, in its initial stages; but it is dry as practicing scales is dry: sooner or later the 'notes' of dogma will weave themselves into spiritual music. To meditate upon Catholic teaching concerning God, man and sin, judgment, grace, salvation, the Sacraments, and so forth, is slowly but surely to enter upon a new world of wonder and beauty. The road to that new world may be wearisome; it is only the road, and roads have an end."

To the average pragmatic mind such sentiments as the following, by Charles W. Gilkey, rather find a hearty response:

> "It is not at all strange that Jesus' suffering on the Cross, even more than His teaching on the mountainside or from the boat, should since have become not only the characteristic symbol, but in profound sense, the very substance of His religion. His way of dying was the crown and climax of His way of liv-

ing; and so even on the Cross, He Himself is still the incarnation and the 'best evidence' of all that He had said and taught."

It were stupid, indeed, to condemn the theologian for trying to think through the mysteries of religion. Jesus provoked thought as no other teacher has done. He loved the truth and commended it to His disciples saying, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

If the church has no room for the analyst and the metaphysician, the historian and philologist, for the higher critic and the archæologist; if it has no welcome for the philosopher, for the poet and his imagination, then it becomes indeed a stagnant pool in the ever-changing ages. The church has never been harmed by honest thought, except when the thinker has turned dogmatist and propagandist and has forced his creed upon others. To the contrary, it has always been the richer when accepting truth from whatever laboratory. Thus alone has it been deterged from the superstitions and errors of the past and become an advance agent for truth in an unfolding world. The mischief has been in giving indigestible stones of dogma to hungry men who have asked for spiritual bread. Happy, therefore, is the man who is able to interpret the meaning of the Cross in terms of daily need in the thought channels of his own age to those who cry for emancipation from the things that shackle their souls.

After all, it is the *result* of religion that counts most in life. In the field of biography no volumes have appeared more prolifically in recent years than lives of Abraham Lincoln. How varied have been the portraits! Gradually we are put into possession of such truth as research has yielded. Whole sections of Herndon's two volumes are deleted because they are questionable. For many years Mr. Lincoln's father, Thomas, was believed to have been a worthless fellow, with all the great qualities of the son coming from the Hanks' side of the parentage. Came Ida Tarbell with some facts which trace the Lincolns from a stalwart Eastern inheritance. Later still came a volume by Louis Warren, a young Hodginsville minister, who from the county records of Kentucky has discovered that Thomas Lincoln actually owned cattle and horses in quantities respectable for the Hodginsville area in his day. Carl Sandberg speculates about what the stars said to the future president as, arm in arm with Ann Rutledge, he walked the one short street of Old Salem or sat dreaming on the banks of the Sangammon. Comes Senator Beveridge with a thirst for cold facts, decrying speculation, and the end of Lincoln biographies is not yet. But what mattered these varying notions to the four millions of slaves from whom Lincoln struck the shackles of inhumanity? They rejoiced in actual emancipation, caring little about the lineage of the emancipator.

Likewise, what matters it to the millions in India who are shackled by the caste system; or to other millions in China at the mercy of a chaotic government and bound by blind devotion to antiquity; what difference to the orphans and the widows and to the army of the dead caused by the holocaust of war; or to those who suffer social and economic injustice even in America—what matters it to all these whether Arias or Athanasius was right at Nicea, whether Radbertus or Berengar triumphed at Lateran, or whether Monophysitism or Diophysitism survived? The multiplying of creeds about the Christ will not advance His popularity nor will dogmatism about the Cross keep the redeemed from turning to other gods. If the mystics and the intelligentsia of the Orient or the philosophers of the West choose to tax their mental strength in the field of religion, the spirit of Jesus will not say them nay unless their dogmas are forced upon His church as standards of orthodoxy in the on-going of the kingdom.

The Lausanne Conference is a modern example of a noble passion stifled by an ignoble sectarian tradition. That representatives of seventy different sects sat together in a conference more nearly approximating ecumenical proportions than any other in modern times, and, only for the purpose of understanding each other, is in itself highly praiseworthy. But the fact that its agenda was largely and necessarily drawn from mediæval theology rather than from the fields of vital Christianity which is charged with the solving of stupendous, present day issues, greatly prescribed its largest possible results. As long as individual Christians, because of differences in non-essentials, refuse to worship and labor with their fellow disciples, so long will Christianity be as impotent to mark the spiritual and social progress of the race, as would a watch to mark the passing of time should its jewels refuse to co-operate with each other in the essential mechanism of the instrument as a whole. Furthermore, it is both interesting and disillusioning to remember that in all of Jesus' conferences with individuals and in His public utterances, emphasis on a spirit-filled life far outweighed what is commonly called doctrine. The essential creed of the New Testament church as a condition of fellowship was limited to Peter's confession—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."[3]

There would be scant hope for the realization of Christ's dream of a spiritualized race, were it not for the fact that over against the dogmatists there are increasing numbers of His disciples who conceive the chief business of Christianity to be the injecting of Christian principles into the whole fabric of human endeavor by first attuning the individual to Jesus. To the man seeking help in a busy world, the Cross cannot primarily connote a creed but a symbol of life, an attitude of mind, a conviction followed to its climax. As E. Stanley Jones asserts, "If self-sacrifice is life's most noble quality, then run it back to its finest type and you will find yourself gazing on the Cross." Not far from the myriads of black, gray and white crosses among the whispering poppies on the battlefields of France is the simple tomb of Quentin Roosevelt, who lies buried where with his plane he fell behind the German lines. Along the road into Paris and a short distance from the tomb a memorial fountain has been erected. As one watches the fresh water flowing from the marble mouth between the emblems of the two nations, he reads in chiseled letters this significant sentiment suggested, I am told, by the young soldier's illustrious father—"Only he is fit to live who is not afraid to die." This expresses exactly what transpired on the Cross. It links Calvary with Gethsemane, for had Jesus not said—"Not my will but Thine be done," He could not have said "It is finished." Like a silken thread which holds together a string of precious pearls, so the heroic love of Jesus binds together all His beneficent deeds reaching from the Jordan to Golgotha. The atonement cannot be restricted to the few short hours on the Cross, for it essentially embraces all that He did, and said and was. The Cross was the climax of a passion. If "Socrates died like a philosopher and Christ died like a God," it is because the one had lived like a philosopher while the other had lived like a God. Therefore, it does not seem difficult to see that the power of the Cross is not in its dogmatism but in its spirit. Harry Kemp was right when he wrote:

---

[3] Matt. 16: 16.

"I cannot put the Presence by, of Him, the Crucified,
Who moves men's spirits with His love as doth the moon, the tide;
Again I see the Life He lived, the Godlike Death he died.

"He comes to break the barriers down raised up by barren creeds;
Above the globe from zone to zone, like sunlight He proceeds;
He comes to give the world's starved heart the perfect love it needs,—

"The Christ, Whose friends have played Him false, Whom dogmas have belied,
Still speaking to the hearts of men—tho' shamed and crucified,
The Master of the centuries Who will not be denied."

CHAPTER XIII

The Message of the Cross to the Individual

ON a recent twelfth of February the *Illinois State Register* of Springfield exhibited a life-size Littlefield portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Six decades before this the management of the same journal had transmitted to the people of the Middle West the news that their personal friend and fellow-townsman had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, thereby liberating four millions of slaves. While many on the above anniversary were visiting his tomb in Oak Ridge, a long procession of others paused before the portrait of "The Man for the Ages" as Irving Bachelor calls him, or "The Master of Men" as Rothchild has so strikingly portrayed him.

Among the spectators, none other could quite match the appreciation of an old ex-slave who, as a frail infant, in the forties, had been sold for the sum of five dollars. After sixty years of freedom, he was looking upon the face of his emancipator. By the same law of portraiture—seen in a Rembrandt or a Van Dyck—those beneficent eyes, from whatever angle, looked straight into his.

Infinitely more personal to every human being is the portrait of the world's Emancipator exhibited to us in the four gospels. Like the moon which paints a silver path across the waters to the feet of every man who stands upon the shore, so the Christ has paved a path from Calvary to the heart of every child of the race, saying, "Come unto Me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[1] With many and varied needs, His disciples have followed this path, always to receive a new inspiration for their tasks with every look at His heroic life and death.

Calvary has ever been the individual's greatest comfort in the hour of persecution. Thus would a long line of martyrs testify. During those early and bloody years of torture it imparted courage to many unfortunates and made it possible for the infant church to rise with gyroscopic certainty after every seeming defeat. This its enemies were slow to apprehend. Nero, under whom the first persecution began, had not sensed this great fact when he saw Paul and other Christians put to death. Domitian and Diocletian had many victims to their credit, but they too died ignorant of their failures. Even the more kindly disposed Marcus Aurelius (161-

---

[1] **Matt. 11: 28.**

180 A.D.), under whose reign Justin Martyr was slain and the aged Polycarp burned at the stake in Smyrna, never appreciated to the full that the "cause was greater than a human life," and that there was an indefinable power of survival about the new religion which baffled him. Perhaps the nearest he ever came to recognizing it was when the Thundering Legion, composed largely of Christians, prayed for rain that his suffering soldiers might not die of thirst. Whether or not the coming of thunder and rain immediately thereafter had any salutary effect on his attitude, the fact remains that this marked the end of aggressive persecution against the church.

Of all the Christian nations, none ever paid a greater price for its religion than did Armenia. Among the earliest to adopt the new religion and after nineteen centuries still loyal in faith and practice, scarcely a century has passed over her without persecution and bloodshed. The last of these were during the war of 1914-18 and the Smyrna Disaster of 1922, still so horribly fresh in our memories. The World War had already taken about half the population, leaving approximately four millions of people. Then came the massacre. Neither the Greeks nor the Armenians have ever been able to understand why the Turk was allowed to indulge unmolested in such mad slaughter, while gunboats of the allied nations were lying in the harbor within hearing distance of the cries of helpless women and children.

My mental gallery carries an indelible picture of thousands of Armenian war orphans in the Near East Relief camps in Athens, Corinth and Haifa and other thousands of refugees, mostly Armenians, located in the suburbs of Athens. The Greek Government had been more than generous in furnishing an asylum for these unfortunates. The refugees from the Smyrna massacre were composed mostly of women, children, old men and a few who were incapacitated. The surface sewers were, of course, unsanitary in the extreme. The huts were constructed from the city's waste of boards, boxes and tin. Each hut seldom sheltered one family, but rather fragments of several, gathered together during and after their forced migration. Yet they were indeed most welcome makeshifts. As I stood in one of these huts and listened to an Armenian mother of refined face and manners tell the story of her husband's tragic death, typical of many others, her own hardships, and the birth of babes at the water's edge in Smyrna during the massacre, I could but feel that her faith matched fully that of the early centuries. In the center of the colony was its best building, a very modest Christian Church, the secret of the heroism of these disintegrated families. The same courage with which Polycarp as Bishop of

Smyrna had strengthened Ignatius on his way to Rome and death was spanning the centuries and lending heart to the latest victims of persecution.[2] This remnant of the ancient city which contains the tomb of Polycarp could once more turn to the words of John, sent from the Isle of Patmos to the angel of Smyrna during the earliest persecution and read, "I know your persecution and your poverty, yet you are rich. . . . Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. . . . Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life."[3] Again, history had borne witness to the failure of the conqueror. In the language of William Wetmore Story:

"They only the victory win—
Who have fought the good fight, and have vanquished the demon that tempts us within:
Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight,—if need be, to die.
Speak History! Who are life's victors? Unroll thy long annals and say,
Are they these whom the world called the victors, who won the success of the day?
The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans who fell at Thermopylae's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate or Christ?"

---

[2] For an appreciation of Armenian faith see Elliott's *Beginning Again at Ararat.*

[3] Rev. 3: 8 ff., Twentieth Century Translation.

The martyr has his counterpart in every generation. Life is composed of lights and shadows and the story of the Cross will illumine every spot in the individual's experience. Let a twentieth century sufferer testify:

Graduated from the university with honors, happily married and rapidly promoted in a series of pastorates in which the most discerning recognized the voice of a prophet, his strong frame was attacked by a baffling disease. Middle age found him in an invalid's chair. Like Stevenson, Byron Palmer did not know freedom from pain. Can he sing the songs of Zion in the strange land of suffering? Robbed of his pulpit throne, will he now hang his harp on the willows of his Babylon of isolation? He might have said, much as Stevenson wrote to his friend Meredith, "For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health. . . . I have written in bed and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam with weakness. And the battle goes on—ill or well, is a trifle." During that long period of physical invalidism Palmer, too, wrote persistently. One of his volumes entitled *God's White Throne* contains a chapter on "The Dark Hemisphere." It is in reality a chapter out of his own experience in which he plays the part of Carlyle's Teüfelsdreck or Nietzsche's Zarathustra. In it keen disappointment is overshadowed by spiritual conquest. Drawing aside the veil, he paints the picture of a victor walking straight through his arch of triumph. One of the richest experiences of the writer's early ministerial career, when the philosophy of the classroom had not yet been seasoned by a plunge into the empirical world, was to live neighbor to this sufferer and witness the heroism which had gained for him the right to be called "The ministers' minister."

Some place between the cradle and the grave, there is a dark hemisphere for every son of the race. Serious life handicaps, sickness, failure in vocation, disappointed hopes, defeated ambitions, broken hearts, disillusionments, death, a thousand perplexities—dark hemispheres all, though with varying density. Where is there a minister who cannot visualize in every congregation he addresses the counterpart of the martyr calling for courage to hold on? It is easy to close one's eyes to the man who comes to the house of worship not for charity or dogma, but for a word of hope to encourage his halting feet. But if the church fails at this point, it is guilty of the heresy of neglect. It is easy to overlook the one sick man in the midst of the incessant rush of the ninety and nine, or the one Hermas who reaches out for the long Lost Word. Jesus found time to heal the leper, to restore the withered hand of a man on the Sabbath, or to single out among the many who waited at the Pool of Bethesda the one unfortunate who, when the water was troubled, had no one to lead him into it.

And what a great company of witnesses to the triumph of faith may be summoned to walk hand in hand with the man who is passing through his dark hemisphere of physical or mental suffering; Ray Palmer and Robert Louis Stevenson, victims of the "white plague"; John Milton and George Matheson, blind poet and blind preacher, among hosts of others. No more popular lines have been added to modern hymnology than Palmer's *My Faith Looks Up to Thee,* or Matheson's *O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go*—both of which were penned in the torch light of faith. The spirit which prompted Milton's *Sonnet on His Blindness* has inspired hundreds of thousands of wounded soldiers either to prepare for a place of usefulness in the peaceful pursuits of life or to sit resignedly while finding comfort in Dante's lines:

> "Our life revives, since one doth now console,
> Who sorrows with us, healing grief with grief."

CHAPTER XIV

The Message of the Cross to the Individual

(Continued)

THE Cross has a message to another type of man. This type walks the streets of every modern city, town and countryside. He is found in the dive and in the fashionable places of the community. Sometimes he is clothed in the garments of the down-and-out and again in the latest model. His name may indicate that he is of recent foreign ancestry; again, to trace his genealogy may lead back to the "Mayflower." Sometimes he is a representative of one of the "tinted" races and then he is of boasted Nordic blood. He may be as unconcerned about the conventionalities of polite society as was Dr. Samuel Johnson, or he may conduct himself with the suavity of a Chesterfield, for in every stratum of life is this man who has lost the moral trail.

To call him by his right name, he is the liar who may either be playing loosely with the truth in words or selling "blue sky" stocks. He is the thief who crawls through your window and escapes with your jewels or the one who gains your economic confidence and reaps an exorbitant profit from your investment. He is the adulterer who wins a woman's affections and then robs her of her virtue. He is the man who frequents the legalized centers of vice, or, reverting to the standards of David's day, kills Uriah by the proxy of the divorce courts that he may marry Bathsheba. He is the bold bandit who shoots down his victim with a thirty-two caliber gun or sits in high places and hurls nations into a war which takes its human toll by the millions with Howitzers, Zeppelins, deadly gases or machine guns. Now we call him a diplomat who exploits a weaker nation in the name of progress, steals its undeveloped resources, or through treaty rights puts his government into possession of priceless territory which some day must be released, perhaps at tremendous cost of life. In short, he is the man governed by the philosophy that guiltlessness consists in evading the law, or with the pagan conception that might makes right. Since this type of man was made in the image of God, he is a child of His and, therefore, has a better side to his nature. In him Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde have not yet fought to the finish. He is religious. He is a modern Jean Valjean who needs to be directed toward Arras to confess his guilt.

This is the type of man Jesus had in mind when

He said to the formal religionists of His day, "The Son of Man came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."[1] One may well ask whether the church, like the priest and the Levite of old, has not too easily passed by this man, leaving to the Samaritan of the Rescue Mission or the Salvation Army the task of picking him up and taking him to the inn for healing. If, as is frequently the case, his social standing keeps him away from the Salvation Army Hall or the Rescue Mission, the church becomes his only hope. The question then is—Does the church awaken his soul? It is so easy for the pulpit to slip into the use of harmless platitudes, rather than to run the risk of thundering out the moral law that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."[2] It is much safer to become "a seller of rhetoric" as St. Augustine calls it, than to make plain the fact that such a man is a transgressor and that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."[3] This is to betray the sacred trust of the church. Paul's personal slogan—"Woe is me if I preach not the gospel"—may well constitute the challenge of every pulpit.

There is another type of man who asks, "And what is the message of the Cross for me? I have committed none of the cardinal sins, I do not live in an age of martyrdom and I have already passed successfully through my dark hemisphere." This is the successful man of affairs, the man of refinement and culture. He is found both in and out of the church's constituency. To him Milton's sonnet, Fletcher's *Gethsemane,* or the classic story of the Prodigal would be primarily good literature.

---

[1] Matt. 9: 13.
[2] Rom. 6: 23.
[3] I John 1: 7.

To such a man religion may easily become a sort of popular adoption, a mark of respectability, or as Paul put it—a "form" without the "power." If his religion is to be saved from being a merely perfunctory performance; if the Sermon on the Mount is to become for him a living reality rather than a glass cabinet ideal; if Christianity is to develop in him a passion for conquest rather than remain a passive possession, then the spirit of the Cross must be translated in terms of unselfish service. Wealth, culture, training must serve rather than enslave their possessors.

That this challenge is being generously accepted is one of the hopeful signs in this day of unprecedented plenty, especially in America. The Year Book of one of America's largest denominations recently listed one church as having given for all purposes during the year a sum approximating $100,000. Of this amount it is reported that the sum of $43,000 was given by a group of individuals who were saved from their prosperity by taking God into their partnership, learning the science of Christian stewardship and giving a tithe of their income to the kingdom. This is a growing spirit in many churches and the sums given to kingdom building are mounting higher each year.

In China, one marvels at the scope of the Peking Union Medical College with its splendid group of buildings and equipment, affording every means for medical research and furnishing every important medical journal in print. This is the result of a Rockefeller gift of $8,000,000 with a purely humanitarian motive. Furthermore, the Foundation provides that every medical missionary in China shall have the privilege of being an annual guest of the institution with clinical opportunities under the direction of some of the best medical authorities imported from the West. To witness the suffering of the Chinese people through ignorance of medicine or of the science of living, is to appreciate the far reach of one of the most magnanimous enterprises of all time. Many gifts of smaller proportions have been made by others in the same spirit.

Moreover, there are evidences of unselfishness abroad in what we sometimes call the cold business world. On Christmas Day of 1925, *The Illinois State Register* announced the fact that the members of a certain family in its community had sent checks through the mails as Christmas gifts amounting to almost three-quarters of a million dollars. The story back of the unusual incident is this: Forty years before, their father's bank had failed. It was an honest failure and one which was beyond his power to redeem. He had died an honest debtor and his creditors had stoically settled down to forget their losses. In the eyes of the law his heirs were not responsible. But they had prospered, and after long months of tracing their father's creditors and their heirs in many states, these sons and daughters of the banker were now paying every dollar of his indebtedness with five per cent interest over a period of forty years.

These monetary examples of unselfishness are but symptomatic of what is transpiring in many lives and can be duplicated in terms of culture, spirituality and intellectual power. It is the ethical spirit of Christ which to this type of man has become a real dynamic. It has spared him from becoming a liability to society and has made of him a powerful asset in kingdom building. Wise, indeed, is the church which gives this man a vision of unselfishness.

In the throng to which the Cross ministers, there is yet another type demanding in Rex Boundy's words:

> "Give us a virile Christ for these rough days;
> You painters, sculptors, show the warrior bold;

And you who turn mere words to gleaming gold,
Too long your lips have sounded in the praise
Of Patience and Humility. Our ways
Have parted from the quietude of old;
We need a man of strength with us to hold
The very breach of death without a maze.
Did he not scourge from temple courts the thieves?
And make the arch-fiend's self again to fall?
And blast the fig tree that was only leaves?
And still the raging tumult of the seas?
Did he not bear the greatest pain of all,
Silent, upon the Cross of Calvary?"

This is the voice of youth. It may be the echo of a million lads who followed their leaders to the trenches in what they believed to be a righteous cause, singing as they went, Reginald Heber's lines—"The Son of God goes forth to war, A kingly crown to gain." It may well represent the mood of three hundred thousand young men and women in our colleges and universities who are soon to assume the responsibilities of church and state, of home and industry, indeed of all the affairs falling within our cosmic modern program. Or again, we may anticipate its coming from that other great American army of more than three millions of young lives that tax the present capacity of our high school buildings. It is the voice of the modern Sir Galahad whose "strength is as the strength of ten because his heart is pure" going out in quest of the Holy Grail. What is our reply?

Let Jesus answer—"The Son of Man came not to be-ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many."[4] Not strength for the sake of strength, not education for education's sake, or culture for culture's sake, but all of these for humanity. Dr. Frederick Shannon not long ago related his experience in finding a bust of Mozart in the back yard of a Chicago home. The minister's sense of fitness was jarred at the seeming incongruity of seeing this Master among the usual contents of a back yard, when he was made to grace a parlor or a studio. Finally, he concluded that the back yard could have no possible ill effect on Mozart, but that Mozart might add a touch of refinement to the back yard.

This is the spirit of service which the Cross personifies. It is the outlook which saves youth from economical, social and intellectual snobbery. It is the passion that sent Dr. Wilfred Grenfell from the medical halls of London to invest his young life among the needy fisherfolk on the bleak coast of Labrador. As a recognition for a career of heroic service, King George has knighted him. If youth demands a thrill, here it is—Grenfell stranded on a cake of ice, killing one of his dogs for fur to keep from freezing, finally reaching his patient sixty miles across the bay.

---

[4] Matt. 20: 28.

This is the spirit that moved a brilliant young professor, theologian, author, interpreter of Bach compositions, to leave a chair in Strassburg University that he might minister to the colored people in one of the coffee belts of Africa. Now the name of Albert Schweitzer is a household word among thousands of the black people on the Labarene in French Equatorial Africa, and his word is authority on philosophy and comparative religion in nearly every university of the West. On his furloughs Dr. Schweitzer turns to the organ, giving a series of Bach programs the proceeds of which he invests in his modest hospital among the blacks. If the parlors of London and Strassburg are the poorer for losing a Grenfell and a Schweitzer, then Labrador and Africa, two of the world's back yards, are the richer. When Africa shall have been lifted from its ignorance and superstition it may give to the world many Booker T. Washingtons, Paul Dunbars, Fred Douglasses, or even another Sebastian Bach. Service is the challenge, whether abroad or at home, and there is a spiritual adventure for every youth.

Now another speaks. His face is like Rembrandt's *Portrait of an Old Man,* furrowed, tired, scarred by many battles. It is the voice of age lingering between time and eternity. This man has run his course. It has taken him through the daring virility of youth, led him to seeming failure or to the pinnacle of success and fame. Perchance he detoured for a time on the way of the transgressor. Certainly a portion of his long pilgrimage has been spent in his own dark hemisphere. But the Cross has never failed him. It cannot fail him now. The words of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, written while the reformers were quarreling about the philosophy of the atonement and the metaphysics of the resurrection, still belong to the man who, like Paul, has borne the Cross, fought his fight, finished his course and won his crown:

"Now hath my life across a stormy sea
Like a frail bark reached that wide port where
All are bidden, ere the final reckoning fall
Of good and evil for eternity.

* * * *

"Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
My soul that turns to His great love on high,
Whose arms to clasp us on the Cross were spread."[5]

The Christian roster over nineteen centuries lists the names of men and women, literally by battalions, to whom in life's sunset hour the Cross has stretched its beneficent arms. Among these was Robert Burdette, lecturer, humorist, preacher. Few public men have trod more dangerous paths than he; few have been better known to the American masses of this generation; none has exhibited a greater faith in things eternal. During his last illness he wrote from his California home to a friend:

---

[5] Stewart, *Anthology of the Cross*, p. 73.

"Ever since June, 1912, when I made my last public appearance, we have been living in our summer home down here by the sea. 'Eventide,' Mrs. Burdette named it, because it faces the sunset. It is very pleasant, this 'afternoon land,' in spite of sickness. I watch the sunset as I look out over the rim of the blue Pacific, and there is no mystery beyond the horizon line, because I know what there is over there. I have been there. I have journeyed in those lands. Over there where the sun is just sinking is Japan. That star is rising over China. In that direction lie the Philippines. I am perfectly conscious of that.

"Well, there is another land that I look toward as I watch the sunset. I have never seen it. I have never seen anyone who has been there; but it has a more abiding reality than any of these lands which I do know. This land beyond the sunset—this land of immortality, this fair and blessed country of the soul—why, this Heaven of ours is the one thing in the world which I know with absolute, unshaken, unchangeable certainty. This I know with a knowledge that is never shadowed by a passing cloud of doubt. I may not always be certain about this world; my geographical location may sometimes become confused. But that other world—that I know. And as the afternoon sun sinks lower Faith shines more clearly, and Hope, lifting her voice in a higher key, sings the songs of fruition.

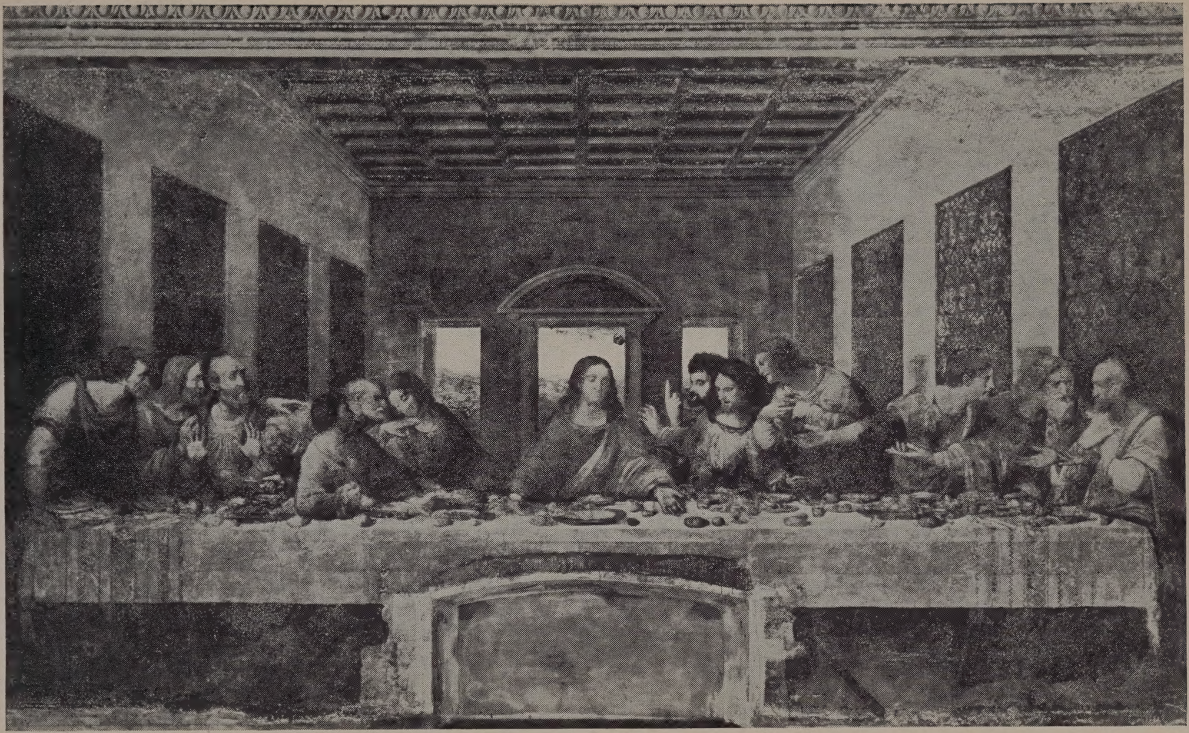
"My work is about ended, I think. The best of it I have done poorly; any of it I might have done better. But I have done it. And in a fairer land, with finer material and a better working light, I will do better work.

"Good-bye, God bless you, and keep you day by day."

Thus it is that Calvary's experience provides strength in the hour of persecution and serves as a light to the feet of him who passes haltingly through the dark hemisphere. It promises propitiation for the one who staggers wearily over the thorny path of sin and places culture and plenty into the hand of their possessor as an instrument of service. It is a challenge to the abounding strength of youth and, in the sunset of life, a never failing source of faith in immortality.

Part Three

THE LORD'S SUPPER — IN MEMORY OF HIM



THE LAST SUPPER — LEONARDO DA VINCI

CHAPTER XV

The Lord's Supper — A Pilgrim's Experience

THE old convent Santa Maria delle Grazia in Florence would probably have been razed to the ground long ago but for the fact that its walls were destined to preserve an artist's conception of the historic supper in the upper room at Jerusalem. Under the encouragement of the Medici an obscure youth in Florence rose from a painter of homely objects to a painter of portraits. Ludovico Sforza enticed him to Milan and in later years he became a rival of Michelangelo. Today the statue of Leonardo da Vinci graces one of the most important spots in that historic city and travelers from the ends of the earth make their way to the old convent to look upon one of the twelve greatest masterpieces of art.

As he went about the streets of Milan seeking thirteen subjects to be reproduced upon these walls, it is said that Leonardo searched long before finding the one whom he was willing should represent the Christ. Legend has it that after he had unveiled the painting, he moved incognito among the spectators, weighing every comment which passed from their lips. Depressed at hearing a disproportionate emphasis upon the naturalness of the table and the linen, and too little upon the Christ whom he had tried to give the place of primacy, he seized his brush and all but obliterated the elements he had tried to subordinate. When *The Last Supper* was finished the name of Leonardo da Vinci became immortal.

The reputation of *The Last Supper* is due less to the greatness of Leonardo's art than to the permanent significance of the scene in the upper room. The church has looked upon the establishing of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as among the most significant events in the ministry of Jesus. It returns to His words again and again and reads with reverent attitude, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."[1] One can readily understand how the enthusiasm of the early disciples led them to the daily breaking of bread and why the spirit of buoyant gratitude impregnated the whole program of the mother church in Jerusalem. Luke's record reads, "And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people."[2] With the crystallizing of a more orderly form of worship, the ordinance was observed weekly. Again Luke writes, "And upon the first day of the week when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them."[3]

---

[1] Luke 22: 19.
[2] Acts 2: 46, 47.

This weekly observance continued for several centuries. The Ante-Nicene fathers made the Lord's Supper the most solemn part of the Sunday worship, while sporadically at least, the Apostolic custom of daily observance was continued. Augustine (A.D. 354) calls the Eucharist "Our Daily Bread." It was Basil's custom (A.D. 330) to commune four times each week. Justin Martyr (A.D. 166) and Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 155) assigned to the communion a central place in the weekly worship. So important was it considered as a part of the Christian's spiritual culture that the emblems were carried to the homes of the sick, to those in prison and to absent members who were unavoidably kept from the service. The frequency of its celebration varied from the monthly to the annual observance and to special and great occasions. The West placed more emphasis upon its frequency than did the East. After the fourth century the Eastern Church seems to have confined its celebration to annual events or to special occasions. Here all laymen who failed to celebrate it at least on Easter, Christmas or at Pentecost were threatened with excommunication."[4]

---

[3] Acts 20: 7.

[4] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, III, p. 516.

For the first three hundred years of the Christian era, during which period there were few church edifices, the ordinance was celebrated in the private homes of believers and in the catacombs, secure from the dangers of interference. Since the days of Constantine, when the church and state joined hands for better or for worse, the celebration has taken place in modest chapels, in more pretentious church edifices, in majestic cathedrals and under the canopy of the skies in the great out-of-doors. In spite of the varying interpretations in Christendom, to be a pilgrim either in the capacity of a celebrant or as an interested spectator, is indeed a rich experience.

Westminster! Rich in sculpture, painting and architecture; repository of the historical wealth of the Anglo Saxon race! My soul is stirred by a chorus of men artistically vested after the fashion of the Anglican Church. Ecclesiastical custom might give me no right to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist. But how can I forego the spiritual urge of remembering my Lord at His table in so significant a spot as this? I join the slow procession of worshippers gathered, no doubt, from every quarter of the globe and marching, a section at a time, toward the altar. Here I receive from the hands of the minister the emblems partaken of by people and clergy alike. Though I give to the ordinance my own interpretation, I do not forget that Westminster represents a branch of Christendom which has long held to the "Real Presence" theory of the Eucharist.

On another Sunday I worship in the state church in beautiful Frankfort-on-the-Main. The architecture is of the simpler type. The language is that of Goethe and Schiller, of Mendelssohn, Bach and Wagner. The spirit is that of Luther, Melanchthon and Schleiermacher. Here are soldiers in uniform, bearing every mark of discipline, worshipping with civilians, all blending their voices in singing the great German chorals. I seem to sense the mood of the reformers expressed in such hymns as "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." I feel anew the significance of Wittenberg, Worms, Marburg, the Peasant War and later the sacramentarian controversies. As I make myself a part of this Lutheran group of worshippers, I fully realize that I am fellowshipping with another great body in Christendom which evolved its own interpretation of the Eucharist, after the fires of the early reformation had died down. They call it "consubstantiation."

Here is the historic St. Sulpice in Paris, one of the most noted churches connected with French history. Throngs of people are deeply moved by strains of majestic music. It is Widor, Europe's greatest living organist and, according to many, the most noted since Guilmant, who makes the great instrument speak like voices celestial. The priests are leading the chants and lifting the emblems of the body of Christ high above the heads of the worshippers. According to custom, they alone touch the chalice of wine to their lips, while the congregation partakes only of the bread. As I drink in the spiritual beauty of the architecture and watch the highly developed liturgy, I am reminded that the interpretation given the ordinance on this occasion dates from the Middle Ages, when the names of Radbertus and Berengar were household words in their respective theological camps; when Innocent III decided that there could be but one meaning, namely, that blessing the bread and wine transforms them into the real flesh and blood of Christ. For seven centuries the Roman Catholic Church has held tenaciously to this theory of "transubstantiation."

The Greek Orthodox section of the Christian Church has long been isolated from the West. It is rich in history and in spiritual experience. The title suggests at once the names Paul, Corinth and Athens. The hospitable priest who ushers me into the old Byzantine structure in Athens informs me that the edifice is more than fourteen centuries old. Indeed, it looks older than the Parthenon. I am reminded of the loyalty of these descendants of philosophers and statesmen, orators and sculptors, historians and poets to the sacrificial spirit of Christianity which began to supplant Greek Religion nineteen hundred years ago. This church has known by experience some of the pangs of suffering for its faith, and it is not strange, therefore, that for many years the round wafer, used by them at the celebration of the ordinance, has contained the words, "Jesus Christ Conquers."

Here it is easy to picture Paul standing on Mars Hill preaching to the inquisitive Epicureans and Stoics great facts concerning The Unknown God. One of the causes of the schism which took place in the middle of the eleventh century between the East and the West was the use of unleavened bread by the Western Church in the celebration of the Eucharist. Yet here hangs a copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, and I am impressed with the fact that the common denominator of faith in the two branches of Christendom is great enough to enable the Greek Orthodox Church, which excommunicated the pope in the year 1053 A.D., to see spiritual meaning in the Eucharist as portrayed by an artist who was committed to the papacy.

To find the various sects celebrating the Lord's Supper in the same community but in different buildings is a commonplace. But to find them under the same roof is an ecclesiastical novelty. In the old university city of Heidelberg, Germany, one sees a structure divided into halves by a solid wall. He is told that for many years the Roman Catholics worshipped in one half and the Lutherans in the other. But the place where one sees the greatest number of sects housed in the same building is in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Here are the Latins, the Greek Orthodox, the Copts, the Syrians, the Armenians, and perhaps others, each claiming a portion of the edifice and celebrating the Eucharist according to its own dogma. The same religious enigma is repeated in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem.

The records of the Nestorian activities in the Orient in the sixth century are too meager to be sure of the emphasis they place on the ordinances. But the modern missionary movement in the Far East has preserved the age-long practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper. It is a great experience to worship with a band of Christians where Mohammedan mosques and Hindu temples are as familiar sights as are Christian churches in America. In this land of mystics and of strong spiritual tendencies, in a congregation where white faces among the brown are about in the same proportion as black sheep among the white, I cannot catch a half dozen words in the native preacher's sermon or a single familiar sound spoken by my friend, the missionary who presides at the communion table. But I find my soul responding to the service because it is being fed by the same spirit as is theirs.

In the land of the old Mings and Manchus, where democracy is fighting for permanency and where the majestic Temple of Heaven is only a huge pile of neglected marble to be viewed by foreign travelers, the experience is equally thrilling. It is far inland at Luchowfu, on a branch of the Yangtse, that I fellowship with my brethren of the Yellow Race. I have never witnessed a more enthusiastic band of worshippers. Every seat in the well-ordered structure is filled for the morning worship after the departmentized church school has finished its program. A native Chinese preacher, in the neat black gown of the scholar, leads his congregation in ensemble singing. They sing not from hymn books but from a chart suspended before them. Deaconesses serve the bread and the wine to the women and girls seated on one side of the room while deacons wait upon the men and boys on the other. The wine is served on wood trays bearing small individual cups of porcelain, and in company with that great host of Christians who look upon the emblems only as symbols, I partake "in memory" of Christ. The sermon, the doxology, the benediction add to an unmistakable feeling of spiritual comradeship in the land of Cathay. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper follows the trail of the Cross around the world.

CHAPTER XVI

The Rise of Theology in the Lord's Supper

AMONG all the footprints to be found in the trail of the Cross, none is more in evidence than those of the theologian. For the major portion of the first three centuries, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was characterized by simplicity and almost uniformity of interpretation. At least there was no wide divergence of opinion expressed. It was quite distinctly a memorial with the spirit of gratitude and brotherly love holding a paramount place. Schaff insists "that it is unhistorical to carry any of the later theories back into the Ante-Nicene Age."[1]

In the fourth century and following, there are evidences of two distinct meanings in the minds of leaders. One of these was based upon the literal interpretation of Christ's words, "This is my body,"[2] and the other upon the symbolic. These two theories ran side by side and were destined to concern the theologians of all subsequent centuries, creating a distinct chasm which has never been bridged. In view of the fact that the ordinance roots in the love of Christ, it is rather difficult to understand the harsh, unbrotherly and even vitriolic words which were employed in the eucharistic controversies of succeeding periods. A long list of names familiar to the student of church history is involved—Augustine, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Ambrose, Eusebius, Irenæus, Cyril, Clement, Origen of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Melanchthon, Wycliffe, Zwingli, and many others. What words were coined to express the various interpretations of these defenders of the faith! They are words which drive us to the dictionary time and again—"transubstantiation," "consubstantiation," "monophysitism," "dyophysitism," and the like.

---

[1] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II, 241.
[2] I Cor. 11: 24.

The high peaks in these eucharistic controversies were reached in the ninth, the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries. Among the representatives who stood for the bodily presence of Jesus was Radbertus in the ninth century. He arranged his argument in the form of a thesis and gave it wide circulation. Among those who stood for the symbolic interpretation was Berengar. When his appeal to reason was circulated in the eleventh century the war was on. It remained for Innocent III to make an ecclesiastical pronouncement at the Council of the Lateran in the year 1215, which assumed to settle the question for all time. He decreed that "There is one universal church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is in a state of salvation. In this church, Jesus Christ Himself is both Priest and Sacrifice; and His body and blood are really contained in the Sacrament of the Altar under the species of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body and the wine into the blood by the power of God, so that to effect the mystery of unity we, ourselves, receive from His what He Himself received from ours."[3] Thus, after eight centuries the doctrine of transubstantiation came into full fruition, and with finality, in the Western Church. From then on, any other interpretation than that was condemned as heresy.

One easily detects the silent but inevitable conflict between the metaphysical and ecclesiastical phases of the Eucharist, even among the most devout and orthodox. The latter, however, dominates over the former and blind faith supplants human reason. The words of Thomas Aquinas are a good illustration of this fact. Said he:

"Hear what holy church maintaineth,
    That the bread its substance changeth,
Into flesh, the wine to blood.
    Does it pass thy comprehending?
Faith, the law of sight transcending,
    Leaps to things not understood."

Some of the practices and interpretations which impress a Protestant in the midst of a throng of Roman Catholic worshippers as so radically different from his own, had their origin during this period. The fixing of the theory of transubstantiation inevitably focussed the mind of the worshipper on the miraculous change of the bread and wine into the real body and blood of Christ as the supreme fact in the celebration. Added to this, of course, was the consequent forgiving of his own sins through participation in the same. This gave the priest new power and the institution a new place. The priest was now the representative of God offering an "unbloody sacrifice." The events of Calvary were being repeated and the people were eye-witnesses to the transaction. Therefore, "to the men of the middle ages the Mass was the mystery par excellence of the church. Around it was gathered all the splendor which art and music could provide." The importance of this transaction must be seen by all the people, so the priest began to "elevate the Host," that is, to lift the emblem high above the heads of the worshippers, and now for more than six centuries, the Roman Catholic Church has practiced this custom.

---

[3] Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics;* Article, Eucharist.

Furthermore, if the wine became the real blood of Christ, then to spill it would necessarily become an act of real desecration. In some fashion the priest must redeem the substance at any cost and save it for actual bodily consumption. To remove the great danger of wasting the supposed blood of our Lord, the cup was excluded henceforth from the laity.

With this miraculous transformation of the emblems whose benefit was believed to be bestowed upon both the living and the dead, the Chantry System arose. It provided for the raising of an endowment fund to pay for the chant of the Mass for the souls of both the living and the dead of the worshipper's family. By the time Columbus sailed for the new world the system had come into common usage."[4]

In 1517 Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg, and as clear as the sound of a bell the Reformation struck its note of protest against many of these practices. The theory of transubstantiation, however, was not involved in the beginning. Just a dozen years later we see the German Reformer standing in the Council Chamber at Marburg stoutly defending the decree of Innocent III, issued three centuries before. In the presence of the Swiss Reformers, who had been called together by an officer of the State to settle this controversy, Luther with dramatic gesture, took a piece of chalk and wrote upon the council table the words of Christ, "*Hoc est corpus Meum*" (This is My Body). Reformer though he was, he had not moved far from the Roman Catholic position of

---

[4] Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*; Article, Eucharist.

Radbertus, Ambrose, or Cyril of Jerusalem. When he was twitted about the impossibility of eating the real blood and body of Christ, he insisted that if God should place a crab apple and dung before him and tell him to eat it, then he would do so without questioning God. When Zwingli and others of the Swiss Reformers proceeded to argue the case he met them with the statement, "Though infinite myriads of devils and all fanatics should impudently demand how bread and wine can be the body and blood of Christ, I know that all spirits and learned men put together have not as much intelligence as Almighty God has in His little finger."

Thus it was that the first controversy among the reformers was precipitated over the age-long question as to whether or not the words of Christ in the upper room, "This is My Body," should be given the literal or the symbolical interpretation. The eucharistic controversies constituted the entering wedge toward a divided Protestantism. Luther, Melanchthon, and other German Reformers held to the mediæval interpretation, though they called it by the name "consubstantiation," while Wycliffe in England, Huss in Bohemia, Zwingli in Switzerland, and Carlstadt in Germany, held to the figurative interpretation. While we still have in Christendom the several theories which were evolved during the centuries, the Quakers and a few similar groups are wholly unconcerned about the ordinances. They choose to eliminate all external expressions of religion and emphasize only the spiritual.

One often hears the question asked, "Why is it that great hosts of Roman Catholics find their way to the Mass with almost unbroken regularity?" Many thousands flock to the altar even at the break of day. On the other hand, if one were to attend the celebration of the Lord's Supper in many a Protestant Church, where it is not connected with another service, he would find fewer worshippers present. The reason is not difficult to discern. It was not a mere incident that hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world flocked to the Eucharistic Congress held in Chicago in the summer of 1926, numerically the greatest religious gathering ever held in America. When this throng of worshippers saw the "elevation of the Host," they believed that the bishops in charge were repeating the scene of Calvary by offering an unbloody sacrifice, participation in which would cancel all their sins. One can easily understand, therefore, the intensity of the interest manifested.

Perhaps the next largest communion service ever held in America was that celebrated by the Disciples of Christ in Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of their centennial celebration in 1909. Here thirty thousand communicants participated. The mental attitudes, however, of these two great bodies were totally different. One saw the real body of Christ in the emblems, the other saw only the symbol. The worshippers in one group felt absolved by participating in the service, while the others felt conscious that this was but an aid to higher spiritual planes, reminding them that the forgiveness of their sins depended also upon a perpetual faith and a consequent struggle toward a spiritual goal.

The Roman Catholic worshipper reaches the summit of his worship and satisfaction in the Mass. No greater expression of his religion can be conceived of than that one in which the Son of God is again being offered upon the altar by the visible hands of his priest and for the sins of both the living and the dead. The average Protestant, on the other hand, finds his greatest satisfaction in reproducing the ideals of Christ in his own life, the Lord's Supper serving as a means to that end. The Roman Catholic feels as did Chrysostom who said, "When thou seest the Lord slain, and lying there, and the priest standing at the sacrifice it must surely stir the soul."[5] The Protestant says as he sits at the table of his Lord, "Now I must try to be more like the Master who gave Himself for me."

The error of Romanism is that it has so greatly over-emphasized the reproduction of the act on Calvary. The mistake of Protestantism lies in the distance it has gone from the personal and the sacrificial element of Calvary. When it is possible for a Christian to participate in this great memorial feast, so full of the heroic and the sacrificial, and then leave the church with stingy acceptance of its spirit; then we see the great spiritual distance between his personal attitude toward the bringing in of the kingdom and the self-forgetfulness of Jesus who said, "Not My will but Thine, be done." When it is possible for him to partake of the emblems, yet selfishly hug his personal comforts to his bosom for the rest of the week or turn his back upon an unsaved world, this again is evidence that he has never caught the first meaning of the institution. Protestantism needs a revival of the sacrificial, not in the Roman sense of reproducing the act of Calvary in the physical, but rather in the sense of personalizing the atonement and of stimulating within itself the spirit of Jesus. The Church needs to be brought to a new consciousness of the full import of Christ's death, not as a theological dogma but as a spiritual dynamic.

---

[5] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* III, p. 508.

One can appreciate how easy it is for the Lord's Supper to become a perfunctory thing in the midst of a Christian civilization with church bells and chimes ringing and with no one challenging the right to worship. How different in the beginning! The celebration had to be held in secret and then it was done at the risk of the celebrant's life. It was considered such a supreme joy, that, after the catechumens and unbelievers were dismissed from the service, the eucharistic part began with the custom of the Holy Kiss as an expression of the great joy "in being a part of a spiritual family in the midst of a pagan and unspiritual world." One cannot fully appreciate this overwhelming fact until he sits with a congregation in the heart of a non-Christian land and realizes that the Christian population numbers less than two per cent of the souls represented in that part of the world.

While much religion has percolated into the various activities in Christian countries, it is also evident that much of pagan selfishness has found its way into our life and worship. A pragmatic, spiritual revival of the Lord's Supper in the church's program would add power to its life. Rome strikes a mighty chord in making the Mass the center. Protestantism loses much in subordinating the Lord's Supper to acts of worship far less important. In spite of all this the ordinance lives on and commands the attention of multitudes, but it begs for a practical interpretation.

CHAPTER XVII

The Lord's Supper — A Spiritual Experience

AFTER meandering through some of the controversial archives connected with the Lord's Supper, it is refreshing to make a spiritual approach to the ordinance so simply established by Jesus in the upper room. I am compelled to confess that there was a period in my ministry, in a communion which emphasizes pre-eminently the memorial idea, during which I more or less perfunctorily presided at the table or watched others do it without giving it its rightful place in worship. Like most Protestants, who study the subject from the Reformers' angle, I looked upon the Cross with more or less of prejudice and therefore underemphasized it. Consequently, I looked upon the Lord's Supper with a scanty appreciation of its real import. But when I had emerged from the effects of working my way through the historical statements of the eucharistic controversies and had rebounded somewhat from the extreme point to which the pendulum so easily swings, I found myself with a new appreciation of the institution which for so many centuries has been smothered under theological débris. As I sit with my brethren around the table it now becomes one of the richest experiences in the whole program of worship.

First of all, the Lord's Supper affords a period of quiet meditation which our strenuous age so much needs. Visualize a present day congregation; what is it? Particularly in the urban centers, it is composed of a company of individuals whose nerves for six strenuous days often have been stretched to the snapping point. As for the women, some are weary with the duties of home and family, others with the demands of business and professional careers, and still others are intoxicated with the social whirl of the age. And the men? They come from humming factories, from exacting offices, from the competitive spirit of the market-place and from difficult positions of public trust. They are there with deep furrows plowed in their faces by the subtle and persistent tool of responsibility which their generation has thrust upon them. They are part of an age "on wheels" in which life is growing more and more to be a spectacular and fascinating motorcade.

Outside the ranks of the Friends, the average church service is often as strenuous as the daily scenes from which the worshippers come. It makes little room for silent meditation. The organ, anthem, solo, announcements long drawn out, scripture, prayer, sermon, offering, benediction— a sort of spiritual table d'hôte already pretty well predigested—this is the average order of service. Or to change the figure, it is a highly entertaining program with spiritual coloring in which the man in the pew has nothing to do but look and listen and then pass judgment on the performers.

Now comes the celebration of the Lord's Supper, a period of silence to be sure, but a golden silence in which the worshipper is thrown wholly on his own responsibility, and during which there is no voice to be heard but the voice of God. Besides affording him opportunity to get away from the grind of a busy world, a portion of the service should give him time to regain his poise and a chance to enjoy a spell of rich companionship alone with the Christ. Such silence is the noblest motive of mediæval asceticism tempered with spiritual sanity in a busy world out of which, as our Master thought, we dare not pray to be taken. Such "Christian silence," it has been said,

> "is not a piece of amateur psychotherapy; it is a great, practical discipline which makes a highway for God through the wilderness of our disordered thoughts and uncontrolled emotions. It is not an empty space filled with shadows, or a mirror flinging back our own portrait; it is the response of our whole being to the call of God. In it the soul stands at attention. It is a great stillness precisely because

it is a great activity. This experience is not the exclusive property of mystics, the prerogative of leisured people, the birthright of the devotional temperament. It is the bush that may burst into flame for the simplest keeper of sheep, the well that may spring up in the desert for the most ignorant Hagar-soul."[1]

In this spell of silence I am impressed with the great fact that I am the guest of my Master and that He is my Host—a realization which brings to me a certain obligation to respect His wishes. Certainly I cannot be less courteous to Him than I am to others. If I try hard to adapt myself to the highly seasoned curry and the sweets of my Indian hostesses; if I submit to the experience of using the chop sticks to please my Chinese hosts; if I am willing to follow the custom of removing my shoes and with aching legs and feet, to sit cramped upon a mat instead of a chair while I accept the hospitality of my Japanese friends; then I must not violate the life customs of my spiritual Host who invites me to be His table guest.

I am reminded, too, that to do this requires no knowledge of the theological side of the eucharistic controversies through which the table has passed. Furthermore, it would be impossible for me to be His sympathetic and intelligent guest from time to time and not become like Him. Indeed, I would be a hypocrite if I continued to accept His hospitality on Sunday and then went about my business in such a way as to betray my Host by my conduct on Monday. "The gifts of Christ," says Dr. B. A. Abbott, "are woven like threads of eternity into the soul and they can never be taken away."[2] One of these gifts is the noble ambition to be Christlike.

---

[1] E. Herman, *The Finding of the Cross*, pp. 35, 43.

When in meditation I sit at the table of my Host, I am also conscious of being one among the friends of Jesus. His friends are feasting together as in the days when He was with His early disciples in the flesh, and afterward when they met in memory of those sacred hours. Here again, ignorance of all the varied dogmas of the Cross cannot keep me from an appreciation of its social import. I am not surprised that for a hundred and fifty years the celebration of the Eucharist began by the men kissing the men and the women expressing a similar attitude toward the women. Neither am I oblivious of the significance and beauty of the term "Friends," by which one of the Christian communions wishes to be known. It is a great word, and the statement of my host, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,"[3] has greater meaning to me at the communion table than anywhere else in the world, except as I personify it among my friends in the work-a-day world. Here, too, I more readily accept His challenge when He said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you."[4]

---

[2] Abbott, *At the Master's Table*, p. 35.

[3] John 15: 13.

When I realize that the Lord's Supper is spread for His friends, I am compelled to try to make friends of my enemies, if there be such, especially of those who are of the household of faith. I recall that my Host once said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did unto me."[5] Indeed, I am constrained to believe that my Father, who is also the Father of my Host, would be inclined to forgive even the crudest notions of my head more quickly than He would the least hatred in my heart. I am duty bound to be reconciled to every other person in the world as long as I accept such hospitality among the friends of His only begotten Son. There is no human experience which, if seriously engaged in, will have as much power to uproot the pagan in our lives and to make friends of our enemies so genuinely as a serious participation in the communion service. Rulers and diplomats could find no approach to the stubborn international problems which would be so productive of friendliness and so void of the unyielding hate which has hurled the nations into war, as to first sit together as guests of Him, in whose spiritual presence it would be impossible to hate or even to covet. After all, no man can consciously have an enemy in the world without trying to be reconciled to him, if he ever catches the full significance of the Lord's Table.

---

[4] John 15: 14.
[5] Matt. 25: 40.

Then, again, the ordinance is a reminder of His love for me which constitutes the basis of His whole philosophy of life. The familiar "Golden Text of the Bible" looms up before me, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."[6] I see a new personal challenge in the words of my Host as He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another even as I have loved you."[7]

It is a most satisfying experience to sit as the guest of my Lord and find both my head and my heart working harmoniously. It is equally disconcerting to find them at variance. This was the problem of the Reformers. Some succeeded and others failed in its solution. Some seemed to forget that it was the compassion of Christ that led Him to the Cross rather than any metaphysical reasoning about redemption; that it was love which furnished the foundation of His words in the upper room. Two instances will illustrate. When the Mass, with its corporal significance, had been eliminated from the thinking of the Swiss Reformers, and the emptiness of the Church without it bore in upon them, some of them met at Zurich in 1525 and gathered about a simple table where the emblems were spread and served to a kneeling congregation, only, however, after the story of the passion of Jesus had been read from the scriptures and duly commented upon. Here the controversies of centuries were forgotten and love was enthroned in the hearts of the worshippers. Old enemies became friends and embraced each other as did the early Christians at the Agape. "Zwingli, delighted at this manifestation, thanked God that the Lord's Supper was again performing its miracles of love which the sacrifice of the Mass had long ceased to produce."[8] Five years later, Luther and Zwingli stood face to face in the Marburg Conference. When it became evident that their intellectual approaches to the subject could not be harmonized, Zwingli plead for "Union in all things in which we agree; and as for the rest, to remember that we are brethren." But Luther, forgetting the message of love and brotherhood which the ordinance contains, replied, "You do not belong to the Communion of the Christian Church. We cannot acknowledge you as brethren."[9]

---

[6] John 3: 16.
[7] John 13: 34.

---

[8] D'Aubinge, *History of the Reformation*, p. 337.
[9] Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 645.

It is exceedingly unfortunate that, four hundred years after the Reformation, there are still those who are not content with accepting the general Protestant interpretation which forsakes the mediæval standards, but insist upon excluding from their celebration those Protestants who differ from them. The intensity of the partisan slant of some minds was again witnessed at the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in the summer of 1927. With all the fine virtues of that significant conclave, it is a source of deep regret to many that dominance of head over heart was so complete as to preclude a union celebration of this beautiful ordinance by the approximately five hundred delegates representing about seventy denominations. The Jerusalem Conference of 1928 furnishes a delightful mental antidote to Lausanne. I cannot help feeling that it would please our Host to see representatives of every school of theologians, including the Roman Catholics, sitting together and partaking of the bread and wine, each giving to the act his own particular interpretation, if thereby He could see the great common denominator of love given its rightful place. Nothing could make a greater contribution to the unity of believers than such an ecumenical eucharistic celebration. Should not we who have seen the divisiveness of undue emphasis on dogma be able to say with Rupertus Meldanius of three hundred years ago, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."[10] Was the Cross a failure? Was Bourdillon mistaken when he wrote:

"The night has a thousand eyes
The day but one;
The light of a whole world dies
When the day is done.

"The mind has a thousand eyes
The heart but one;
The light of a whole life dies
When love is done."

---

[10] op. cit. VI, 650.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Lord's Supper — A Spiritual Experience

(Continued)

THE Lord's Supper presents the lofty ideals with which my Host constantly challenges me. At once I see also the difficulties I shall inevitably encounter in attempting to realize them. Therefore, I am driven to ask, "By what power shall I be able to attain them?" Where can I find the daily stimulus necessary to their realization?

As I think of the literatures of Greece, of Rome, and even of Old Testament Palestine, they do not provide it. I walk beside the long line of busts in the Vatican, representing the men who created the power of Rome, but I find none which sends me out with a feeling of victory coursing through my blood. I stand on the Acropolis, made famous by Phidias and Praxitiles, at the pulpit of Demosthenes, or beside the traditional prison where Socrates drank the hemlock, and I find nowhere among the men who brought glory to ancient Greece the dynamic which urges me toward these high ideals. Likewise, I pass by the law of Moses, the songs of the Psalmists and the writings of the Prophets of Israel, for neither here do I find strength for victory. It is only when I stand in the presence of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the gospels that I feel the sense of possibility within me. This cup, said He, does not have its origin in any old or existent covenant, but is "a new covenant in My blood."[1] Material power, pagan philosophy and culture, Jewish law, all these are impotent. This is a covenant sealed, not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the blood of Christ. As Dr. J. H. Garrison puts it, such a quest "brings us once more into the presence of the Cross with bowed heads and grateful hearts."[2] It is only when I comprehend the Golgotha experience to which Jesus went submissively that I am able to find the inspiration and the dynamic which I need.

Therefore, since "the law was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ,"[3] the institution which celebrates that fact renders me aid. It enables me to see the difference between Christ and Moses. Even the artists have caught the difference between cold legalism and warm sympathy. Michelangelo's "Moses" portrays a wonderfully human conception of the Law-giver. The veins stand out upon his hands, the muscles and posture are as real as life and one almost expects him to speak. But Michelangelo put into the countenance of Moses the sternness of the Law-giver. With this he cannot inspire me. How differently, on the other hand, have artists such as Holman Hunt or Hoffman portrayed the Master who was the fulfillment of the Law. It is the difference between the sternness of the Law-giver and the warm sympathy of the Love-giver. Law is written upon the tablets of stone and parchment, but love is written in the human heart. Law tells me how I ought to live, but love gives me the power to live; law touches the surface, but love touches the very well-springs of life; law is exacting and punitive, but love is forgiving and inspiring. Therefore, I go away from the table of the Love-giver, saying in my heart as did Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."[4]

---

[1] I Cor. 11: 25.

[2] Garrison, *Half Hours With the Cross*, p. 60.

[3] John 1: 17.

As I visualize the group which sat around the first table in the upper room, and review all the incidents which transpired, it rebukes my ignoble ambitions and forces upon me the thought of humility. Like some of the Apostles, I, too, may easily misconceive the real nature of the kingdom. I hear them contending for the chief places and wonder whether, in the same manner, I may not have secretly felt that the best way I could fit into the work of Christ would be to hold the highest office and occupy the chief seat in the assembly of saints. Then it is that I hear my

---

[4] Phil. 4: 13.

Host say to me as he said to them, "He that is the greater among you let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."[5]

I watch my silent Host as long ago He arose from the table, laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself with it. My eyes follow Him as He removes the dusty sandals from the feet of His Apostles, pours water into the basin by His side and begins to wash their feet. I visualize impulsive Peter revolting against this servile act of his Lord saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Then, as the real spirit of the Cross dawns upon me, I hear myself in the humiliated Apostle saying, "Lord not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."[6]

For some reason, most of the artists omit this act of humility in the upper room. Leonardo did not include it in his masterpiece; Andrea del Sarto finds no room for it in his interpretation; Fra Angelico places Judas with his cat on the opposite side of the table from the rest, but passes by this incident. I remember but one interpretation which suggests this object lesson on humility and that is the almost unknown painting which hangs on the walls of St. Moses in Damascus. Anticipating the act, this artist has placed the basin and the towel on the floor ready for the Master's use.

When a boy I witnessed a feet-washing as part of a Sunday morning service of worship in a Church of God where a revered uncle was a participant. Then I could see only the strange and uncommon side which afforded amusement and provoked a suppressed laughter. Now I fully appreciate the spirit among that group of Christians which literally carries out the final words of Jesus when He said, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Teacher and Lord: and ye say well; for so am I. If then, the Lord and the Teacher have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."[7] While I cannot detect in these words a direct command, I nevertheless wonder whether in our worthy and legitimate desire to carry out an orderly and dignified celebration of the ordinance, with immaculate and faultlessly arranged linen and with a faultless intellectualism, we may not miss entirely what seemed to our Host so essential that His Apostles of long ago should understand. So from His table I go out into the hardening experiences of a busy week, remembering that true discipleship demands humility and a willingness to serve to the uttermost.

---

[5] Luke 22: 26.
[6] John 13: 3-9.

The Lord's Supper reminds me of sins forgiven. A service of worship should be restful, inspiring and uplifting. The ideal service is wholly void of social discord, expressions of envy or hate, and is filled with the spirit of a high moral idealism. If one could always remain on such a mountain top, Christian living would be easier. But the world in which we live is not always like an hour of beautiful worship. It has its temptations, and they are many. Its pitfalls of the lowest order, as well as those which sometimes lurk in the circle of the four hundred, lie in the pathway of every man and woman. So when I sit with my Host and detect that I, too, have "sinned and come short of the glory of God," I ask, as John Carment, an old barrister friend of Alexander Whyte in Edinburgh, once bruskly asked the noted pastor of Free St. George Church, "Have ye any word for an old sinner?" I find my answer in the words of my Host spoken to his first disciples, "This is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you."[8]

---

[7] **John 13: 12-14.**

It seems always to have been in the nature of man to feel the need of sacrifice. The Temple of Solomon and its two successors each gave the altar a place of prominence. The altar among the temple ruins of Pompeii is equally significant. Kalighat in Calcutta which still sacrifices daily its forty goats, perpetuates the same idea. This argues two great facts: first, that men are conscious of their sins before deity and, second, that "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"[9] met man's need and was an expression of the Father's love toward His erring children. For centuries past, the members of the Jewish commonwealth had sealed their covenant between them and Jehovah with the blood of bulls and of goats. The new covenant with God is now sealed with the blood of our Host and we feel a sense of its personal meaning. I have been "bought with a price" and the table at which I sit is the most costly known to men.

---

[8] Luke 22: 20.
[9] Rev. 13: 8.

"It is true that this table is spread with severe plainness. It looks like very simple fare. But it costs more than all the jewels and all the precious metals of earth. It exhausted the treasury of heaven to provide it. For here we have gathered together all the sufferings and sacrifices of Bethlehem and Nazareth, of Gethsemane and Calvary. The humiliation, the pain, the shame, the death of the Son of God, are the costs of these wonderful viands."[10]

Furthermore, I cannot sit at this table with my Lord without remembering the Apostle's words, "Whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord."[11] Therefore, it drives me to introspection. It is a time for me to square myself with the ideals of my Host. Yet, I could easily adopt any one of the several theological conceptions of the Eucharist and still be a hypocrite. I could go perfunctorily through all the forms demanded by any branch of the church in celebrating this ordinance and yet be unworthy of it. This memorial to my Lord drives me to ask whether I have been honest in my business transactions, pure in my social relations, kindly in my home, trustworthy in the day's toil, truthful in my pronouncements, forgiving in my attitudes and Christian in my dealings with all men. If I find myself wanting, it is a time for repentance and for the gathering of new strength to take up the tasks of tomorrow.

---

[10] **Frank M. Goodchild, *Around the Lord's Table.***

[11] **I Cor. 11: 27.**

Finally, if I have been an honest and intelligent worshipper and have faced all these issues at my Master's table, I am ready then to ask, "Am I willing to pay the price of such discipleship?" Since this is a question not unlike the one in Jesus' mind when He wrestled with the cup, I follow Him into the Garden where He fought the greatest battle of His life. As I stand on the slope of the mountain, among the eight old olive trees, gnarled and grey with age, I care not now whether they are one or nineteen centuries old, for I know that they are like those whose leaves were made to quiver on the night when Jesus knelt beneath them and prayed, "Father, if Thou be willing, let this cup pass from me."[12] Here, where Jesus knelt, some sculptor has tried to reproduce the scene. He is kneeling; a cup rests on the ground by His side; an Angel comes to comfort Him, as He looks up into His Father's face, anthromorphically conceived, and says, "Not my will, but Thine be done."[13] Inadequate indeed, for no artist or sculptor can do justice to that tragic but triumphant hour. So I pass from His Gethsemane into mine with the echo of His words ringing in my ears, "Not my will, but Thine be done." If I cannot follow Him in His Garden triumph and personalize His very words, then I shall never be able to fully comprehend what it means to be His guest at the communion table.

---

[12] Luke 22: 42.

Not more dogma, therefore, but more submission; not more controversies about the ordinance, but a better comprehension of its meaning. Not the metaphysics of His death and resurrection, but the crucifying and the burying of the old and the rising of the new man to walk as He walked. For,

"He was the Word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what the Word did make it,
I do believe and take it."[14]

Every intelligent celebration of the Lord's Supper then, brings to the worshipper a fresh view of Calvary and a deeper significance of the symbol to which the tragedy gave spiritual meaning. It applies a new test to his personal discipleship and helps him to measure his own soul by the soul of Jesus in relation to the purposes for which He died. It will drive him to the conclusion that in the thought of a disciple there can be no room for racial prejudice, no place for any kind of social injustice, and no forgiveness for him who denies to the multitudes still in search of The Unknown God his purse, his sympathies or his culture. It will strengthen his conviction that the power of love is greater than the power of might, that the Cross is mightier than the sword, that these two symbols are by nature sworn enemies of each other and that in the years ahead they cannot exist side by side as paradoxically as they have done in the nineteen centuries past. To transport himself to the scene on Calvary will help one to see the futility of dogmatism, the impotence of a divided church, and the sinful grind of sectarian machinery which drowns out the voice of a world calling for the Light. It will give him faith in John's vision of the New Jerusalem, joy in having a part in its realization and the consciousness that in the future as in the past, the greatest progress of the human family will be found in the trail of the Cross.

---

[13] Luke 22: 42.

[14] John Donne, *The Sacrament.*

24
85 Moral
88
103 Immortality
111 "
112

Date Due

~~O 20 '37~~

~~Ap 8 '38~~

~~MY 30 '49~~

~~MAY 2 8~~

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01019 9752